



# SONGS OF A WORKER.

*OTHER WORKS BY ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.*

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*CHATTO AND WINDUS, PICCADILLY, W.*

# SONGS OF A WORKER

BY

ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY

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London

CHATTO AND WINDUS, PICCADIL<sup>ing</sup>

1881

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## P R E F A C E .

THE circumstances under which these poems were written are known to many, but as they seem to enhance the interest of the volume, and form the natural setting of the last expression of the author's mind, it is thought that a few prefatory remarks on the subject may not be inappropriate.

Most of the 'Songs of a Worker' were written during the last two years, and are deeply imbued with that tone of sadness which was rather the effect of a heavy domestic bereavement (which served also as a motive for the selection of many of the themes) than due to any external circumstances which might have led the poet to contemplate his own death as being near at hand. • Mr. O'Shaughnessy had, however,

regained much of the former alacrity and cheerfulness which were the accompaniments of an unusually sanguine temperament, and was seldom more deeply engaged in work than at the time of his illness. He was looking forward with great delight to the removal of the Natural History Department from the British Museum (where he had been engaged in scientific work for some twenty years) to its new home at South Kensington, and evidence also is not wanting to prove how fully his mind was engaged in the preparation of this, his latest volume, the contents of which he had finally settled. The series of poems he had sketched out—‘Thoughts in Marble’—was, however, left incomplete, and the severe attack of inflammation of the lungs, acquired during a winter of unusual severity, terminated, on January 30th, too speedily and unexpectedly in his death, at the early age of thirty-six (the poet was born on March 14th, 1844), for any detailed instructions to be taken as to his wishes.

Of the poems, however, evidently intended for publication, none have been omitted, and nothing added

thereto from the large mass of unpublished manuscript found amongst his literary remains. Some of the lyrics in this volume have already seen the light in different publications, as also the 'Translations from Contemporary French Poets,' which appeared in the pages of the 'Gentleman's Magazine.'

The study of the masterpieces of ancient sculpture—which he had taken up recently with great zest—whilst affording full scope to his imaginative powers, added one more to his already numerous interests and motives for renewed exertions, sufficient to last for many a long year to come. The second portion of this volume, 'Thoughts in Marble,' is the outcome of this study, and includes the *very last* poems composed by him. The spirit which animates them is best defined in words written by the poet a short time before his death, with which I cannot better conclude these remarks. He says:—'I wish to provide against the series of poems which I have associated with the art of sculpture being judged from an erroneous point of view. My artistic object is gained

if, in them, I have kept strictly within the lines assigned to the sculptor's art, an art in which I have as yet failed to perceive either morality or immorality. They are therefore essentially thoughts in marble, or poems of form, and it would therefore be unjustifiable to look in them for a sense which is not inherent in the purest Parian. I have been represented as saying with Baudelaire, "Art for Art," and laying myself open to all the unfavourable limitations which that dictum is unjustly supposed to imply. Truly, I think that a little "Art for Art" has already done a great deal of good in England, and that a little more is needed, and would be equally beneficial. But with Victor Hugo I do not say, "Art for Art," but "Art for humanity," and my meaning is that Art is good—is an incalculable gain to man; but art, in itself equally perfect, which grows with humanity and can assist humanity in growing—is still better.'

A. W. NEWPORT DEACON.

*April, 1881.*

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# CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE ELEGY	xiii
SONG OF A FELLOW-WORKER	3
CHRIST WILL RETURN	9
EN SOPH	25
FALLEN FLOWERS	36
AT HER GRAVE	38
GROWING ON A GRAVE	40
A PARABLE OF GOOD DEEDS	41
A FALLEN HERO	49
IN THE OLD HOUSE	54
SILENCES	56
LYNMOUTH	58
EDEN	63
THE ROSE	68
FOLLOWING A DREAM	70
KEEPING A HEART	71
PROPHETIC SPRING	74
A FALLING LEAF	76
IF SHE BUT KNEW	78
BETWEEN TWO POSTS	80
A LOVE SYMPHONY	81
IN A BOWER	83
A DUET : PIANO AND VIOLONCELLO	85

<i>THOUGHTS IN MARBLE.</i>					PAGE
HER BEAUTY	-	-	-	-	93
A PRIEST OF BEAUTY	-	-	-	-	94
LIVING MARBLE	-	-	-	-	102
BLACK MARBLE	-	-	-	-	104
THE LINE OF BEAUTY	-	-	-	-	106
PENTELICOS	-	-	-	-	107
PAROS	-	-	-	-	108
CARRARA	-	-	-	-	109
DIALOGUE BETWEEN TWO VENUSES	-	-	-	-	112
A VENUS	-	-	-	-	124
THE LAST LOOK	-	-	-	-	125
FRAGMENT	-	-	-	-	127

*COLIBRI.*

CANTO THE FIRST	-	-	-	-	131
CANTO THE SECOND	-	-	-	-	146
CANTO THE THIRD	-	-	-	-	154

*TRANSLATIONS FROM CONTEMPORARY FRENCH  
POETS.*

LÉON DIERX :

LAZARUS	-	-	-	-	169
---------	---	---	---	---	-----

FRANÇOIS COPPÉE :

THE GRANDAMS	-	-	-	-	173
--------------	---	---	---	---	-----

FIRESIDE MUSINGS	-	-	-	-	177
------------------	---	---	---	---	-----

THE THREE BIRDS	-	-	-	-	178
-----------------	---	---	---	---	-----

THE THREE WISHES	-	-	-	-	179
------------------	---	---	---	---	-----

THE JUDGMENT OF THE SWORD	-	-	-	-	180
---------------------------	---	---	---	---	-----

ANDRÉ LEMOYNE :

MARGUÉRITE : AN IDYL	-	-	-	-	183
----------------------	---	---	---	---	-----

	PAGE
PAUL VERLAINE :	
A PASTEL - - - - -	187
ERNEST D'HERVILLY :	
KEETJEN - - - - -	188
ON THE BANKS OF THE TAUBERT - - - - -	189
LA GROENLANDAÏSE - - - - -	190
IN LOUISIANA - - - - -	190
LA CHINOISE - - - - -	191
LA PARISIENNE - - - - -	192
SULLY PRUDHOMME :	
FETTERS - - - - -	194
THE EYES - - - - -	195
THE SHADOW - - - - -	196
PROFANATION - - - - -	197
THE STRUGGLE - - - - -	198
THE APPOINTMENT - - - - -	199
HENRI CAZALIS :	
IN PASSING THROUGH A FAIR - - - - -	200
SADNESS OF THINGS - - - - -	201
CATULLE MENDES :	
SWEETNESS OF THE PAST - - - - -	202
THE LAST SOUL - - - - -	203
PENTHESILEA - - - - -	205
THE CONSENT - - - - -	207
PARVULUS - - - - -	210





*E L E G Y .*

*I CARRY in my soul the loss of her,*

*A grief past words and tears ; when these are o'er,*

*Speechless I can but send you to some shore*

*Lone desolate, to sit there and confer*

*With the immense sea weeping evermore,*

*To know the inward weeping of my soul,*

*A flood no calms can soothe, no tides control.*

*Go forth, too, in the silence of the night,*

*When nothing moves beneath the dismal blue,*

*And, if a mighty sadness lapses through*

---

*The pulseless wakeful pauses, while the light  
Of moon and stars wastes down in splendid dew,  
A moment you may know a thought akin  
To the great sadness of my soul within.*

*My sorrow goes abroad over the fields,  
Darkening the meanings of each leaf and flower ;  
Or if you linger in the desolate bower  
Of some waste rose-garden that no more yields  
The summer fragrance, you may feel the power  
Of my lone endless grievings, ere you start  
And brush the mood of autumn from your heart.*

*Perchance some fading face of long ago  
Limned by a sombre master, in such wise  
May set you musing, with unearthly eyes  
Of infinite appeal, that you may know,  
Through its pale oval, passion-worn with sighs,  
A haunting long regret of buried years  
Like to the woe my living spirit bears.*

---

*Or when, though I am dead and this untold,  
You listen where a hundred hearts are bound  
In one and lifted on a thin sweet sound  
Of music, like a strenuous thread of gold,  
Oh, think of me! I have been there and found  
My life-long thought a moment all contained  
In the inspired string Ernst's finger strained.*



# SONGS OF A WORKER.



*SONG OF A FELLOW-WORKER.*

**I** FOUND a fellow-worker when I deemed I toiled  
alone.:

My toil was fashioning thought and sound, and his  
was hewing stone ;

I worked in the palace of my brain, he in the common  
street,

And it seemed his toil was great and hard, while mine  
was great and sweet.

I said, O fellow-worker, yea, for I am a worker too,

The heart nigh fails me many a day, but how is it  
with you ?

For while I toil great tears of joy will sometimes fill  
my eyes,



And when I form my perfect work it lives and never  
dies.

I carve the marble of pure thought until the thought  
takes form,  
Until it gleams before my soul and makes the world  
grow warm ;  
Until there comes the glorious voice and words that  
seem divine,  
And the music reaches all men's hearts and draws  
them into mine.

And yet for days it seems my heart shall blossom  
never more,  
And the burden of my loneliness lies on me very  
sore :

Therefore, O hewer of the stones that pave base  
human ways,

How canst thou bear the years till death, made of such  
thankless days ?

---

Then he replied : Ere sunrise, when the pale lips of  
the day

Sent forth an earnest thrill of breath at warmth of the  
first ray,

A great thought rose within me, how, while men asleep  
had lain,

The thousand labours of the world had grown up once  
again.

The sun grew on the world, and on my soul the  
thought grew too—

A great appalling sun, to light my soul the long day  
through.

I felt the world's whole burden for a moment, then  
began

With man's gigantic strength to do the labour of one  
man.

I went forth hastily, and lo ! I met a hundred men,

The worker with the chisel and the worker with the  
pen—

The restless toilers after good, who sow and never  
reap,

And one who maketh music for their souls that may  
not sleep.

Each passed me with a dauntless look, and my un-  
daunted eyes

Were almost softened as they passed with tears that  
strove to rise

At sight of all those labours, and because that every  
one,

Ay, the greatest, would be greater if my little were  
undone.

They passed me, having faith in me, and in our several  
ways,

Together we began to-day as on the other days :

I felt their mighty hands at work, and as the day wore  
through,

Perhaps they felt that even I was helping somewhat  
too :

---

Perhaps they felt, as with those hands they lifted  
mightily

The burden once more laid upon the world so heavily,  
That while they nobly held it as each man can do and  
bear,

It did not wholly fall my side as though no man were  
there.

And so we toil together many a day from morn till  
night,

I in the lower depths of life, they on the lovely height ;  
For though the common stones are mine, and they  
have lofty cares,

Their work begins where this leaves off, and mine is  
part of theirs.

And 'tis not wholly mine or theirs I think of through  
the day,

But the great eternal thing we make together, I and  
they ;

## *SONG OF A FELLOW-WORKER.*

---

For in the sunset I behold a city that Man owns,  
Made fair with all their nobler toil, built of my common stones.

Then noonward, as the task grows light with all the labour done,

The single thought of all the day becomes a joyous one ;

For, rising in my heart at last, where it hath lain so long,

It thrills up seeking for a voice, and grows almost a song.

But when the evening comes, indeed, the words have taken wing,

The thought sings in me still, but I am all too tired to sing ;

Therefore, O you, my friend, who serve the world with minstrelsy,

Among our fellow-workers' songs make that one song for me.

## *CHRIST WILL RETURN.*

**C**HRIST will return.' The Church is in high state,  
The mighty conquest of the world is made ;

The mitred priests in robes of purple wait

Before triumphal altars richly laid

With the memorial feast in chalice fine,

And chiselled paten ; no way harsh and rude

Leads to the taking of that food divine

But steps of alabaster ; no rough wood

Is now the cross, but a great golden sign

Of outstretched power that holds the earth in sway,

Whereto great folk on cushions kneel and pray.

The Church is waiting. It has fought right well,

And now, the battle over, swords are sheathed,

And no one talks of blood, and few of Hell.

And when on festal days, with sighs low breathed,  
Set to time-honoured strains, they chant or tell

That story of the Founder's cross, blood-stained,  
That was of wood ; all heads with reverence bend

But no one weeps, because the cause is gained.  
No mother's shriek of Mary comes to rend

The silence ; but the crowd, with seemly look,  
Worshipped and worshipping, serenely prays

Its perfumed prayer out of its ivory book,

Now sits, now kneels, now rises all demure,

While rustles through the church the soft secure  
Demi-religion of these prosperous days.

The Church is waiting. With no crown of thorns

In the great picture of the story.

Ah ! what a glittering halo now adorns

Each rich-robed Saint ; and where, 'mid all the  
glory

Of vestments rich, are Joseph's working-coat

---

And Mary's rags ? It is a throne that waits ;  
For 'tis become a fair thing to devote  
A portion of one's goods to Church estates,  
Holy endowments, and choice charities.  
And they are all the nobles of the earth  
Who kneel, the richest where it holiest is,  
Ranged round the throne according to their worth.  
Great folk no whit ashamed now to beseech  
That Nazarene to come and be their king ;  
For Christ's religion is a comely thing  
Well looked on, and the Church has grown quite rich.

But Christ is very poor !  
He has no purple robe and wears no crown.  
How will He find His way from town to town ?  
Who will proclaim Him King,  
And give Him great renown,  
As He goes from door to door ?  
He has no goods nor gold  
More than He had of old.



Who will His praises sing ?

He has no garment of fine linen sweet,

To enter palaces, and sit at meat

At rich men's tables. Who will take His hand,

And set Him high in the land ?

There is no halo round His head ;

•  
Nay, who will give Him bread,

And bid Him rest His feet ?

He has no house to go to, and no bed,—

Like a beggar in the street.

He has only love !

Yea, and hard things to teach,

With a strange and vehement speech,

Against the great of the earth,

And every law but love.

Who will give Him His worth ?

Who will hear Him preach ?

He has not changed !

He loves what rich men hate,

---

He would spoil their high estate,

    Their houses well arranged,

And give their goods to the poor ;

He loves what priests have cursed ;

If He enters His own church-door,

He will hear no prayers rehearsed,

No praises sung.

He will bid them serve Him no more,

Till the golden vessels are flung

To the flames, and the cross on high

Is broken upon the floor.

It will be to raise a cry,

    It will be to scatter the gold,

And cause the priests to fly—

    It will be to purge as of old.

He has only love !

    Shall He go to the house of the great ?

Shall He take His place above

    All the officers of state ?

Shall He go and sit on the throne ?

Shall He rule His Church, His own ?

Shall He come to the men set apart—

To the women whose goodness is known—

Shall He knock at the door of each heart ?

The rich love wealth and fame,

Forgetting whence they came.

The officer loves the place

Above his place, and to sit,

Respected and with good grace,

Among men—their Christ, to wit,

To whom they make their prayer,

Is a minister or the mayor,

This worthy or that other,

Small love have they to greet

A poor or ill-dressed brother,

Or a beggar out of the street.

And 'tis not they will believe

In the Christ with a tattered sleeve.

---

The king loves to be king.

If his kingdom comes to fall,  
He hates all men and everything,  
And his countrymen first of all  
All other kings are his foes,  
But most of them all he hates  
The uncrowned king who goes,  
From heart to heart and prates  
Of a kingdom for which he waits ;  
And the beggar in the street  
Is the man he fears to meet.

The Priests love patronage,  
Fat livings and Peter's pence,  
And charities that engage  
Great folk bringing recompence  
Of power ; women they cheat,  
And men keep silence for fear  
To lose what they hold most sweet.

The Christ the priest holds dear

Is gentle and musical.

A murmur of genteel prayer,

Mellow and rhythmical,

A perfume of piety ;

His service is, above all,

A thing of good society.

The brazen censer is swung,

No heart has been sorely wrung ;

The words of blessing are sweet,

And the evening hymn is sung,

But the Christ outside in the street,

Is begging for bread to eat.

When wilt thou come, O Christ? Come not to these,

They will not know Thee. There are those will  
know :

Things have scarce changed since by those peaceful  
seas

Of Galilee it was Thy wont to go,  
And sitting with the lowly—Thyself low—  
To tell the folk of love, of love to ease  
The burdens of their labour and their heart,  
Of love to shrive them of their sin, of love  
To shrink not from their shame, and bear a part  
Of their reproach. Art Thou to-day above  
Hearing their sorrows? Wouldst Thou sit to-day  
In the high throne the rich have set for Thee,  
The rich men and the priests? the same are they  
Who scourged and cast Thee out in Galilee.  
But there are outcast folk on other shores  
Dragging the nets, lo! they have taken nought,<sup>e</sup>—  
Their heart is heavy as they ply the oars,  
Their lives are full of woe; no man has sought  
To solace them. Go, enter Thou their boat,  
Tossed in the storm, and speak one little word  
Of comfort, and their skiff will seem to float  
On a less troubled sea, their hearts be stirred  
With a new strength; soon will their net be full,

And going home, they shall believe they heard  
God's voice above the tempest, pitiful,  
More than a man's.

Lo ! in the streets and lanes  
Seest Thou, O Christ, the starved ones know Thee  
now ?  
Not yet forgetting—though their sick hope wanes,  
As day by day Thou comest not—'twas Thou  
Didst feed them once, the day Thy word increased  
The scanty viands, and the crumbs that through  
Thy sweet word's miracle became a feast.  
No man hath fed them *since*, or if one threw  
A bitter morsel to them in Thy name,  
Missing Thy word, they knew 'twas none of Thine.

Come unto those who suffer ; sin and shame  
Are stamped on all alike, but when they pine,  
All hopeless, there are some whose sin God knows  
Was not their own, whose mark of shame was set

---

Upon them in the shameful world by those

Who ne'er had cast the stone hadst Thou but met  
Their guileful glance with Thine all-seeing gaze,  
And made them cower. Now 'tis with Thine own  
word

That world has cursed them, so they dare not raise

Their hearts to Thee ; yet have they never heard  
'The mercy that Thou sent'st them long ago.

See Magdalen in tears upon the ground,  
Spurned once of yore by hard-eyed priests ; and lo !

The poor Samaritan, outside the bound  
Set by self-righteous judges, fears to cross  
Threshold of church and synagogue alike.

Come unto thsoe who seek through shame and loss

Of goods, and prisons, and bitter deaths, to strike  
With the same sword Thou hadst of old, when men  
Cried Peace, and there was no peace ; those who  
fight,



---

And strive, and plan, and dream, as 'Thou didst then,  
Now to uproot these shams ; those who would  
smite

Yon smooth-faced tyrants on the lips, and blast  
With the long-smouldering fires of man's chained  
soul

Their pompous edifice of wiles : at last

Freeing the fettered, shamed, downtrodden whole  
And fair humanity of man. 'These are of Thee,

Pure, fearless young Reformer ! they will clutch  
New hope with fervour when they faint or flee,

Spent or in exile, when 'Thy feet but touch  
The earth once more ; rent, never restful graves

Will give them back to life, the too-soon slain  
Before their victory ; and o'er the waves

And mountains of the world the cry again  
Will be 'Thy name, the true Christ comes and saves !

Come unto those who love. They have thrown down  
The gold they had, cast off the costly dress,

Forsaken a throne and laid aside a crown,  
Because of love ; now they are penniless,  
As Thou art, having nought else ; all men bemoan,  
Or mock, or brand them with an evil name.  
But sitting in their penury alone,  
Or wandering in the desert of their shame,  
Or dying with eyes wide open in amaze  
To find themselves deceived, betrayed, undone,  
Have they repented? As the days  
Close round them and they turn them from the  
sun,  
Wasted and broken, when their words grow weak,  
Their weeping silent, their unanswered sighs  
Scarce part their lips, as having nought to seek,  
Earth falling from them, are there not inward skies  
Opening to heaven since the flame, I say,  
Transmuted all their lives into their love,  
Casting the days of them for dross away?  
Come unto these, O Christ ! they live above  
The world, as Thou didst.

\*

\* a

\*

\*

\*

Crowned with griefs Thou art,  
Clad in rough rags, dishonoured or unknown ;  
And so are these who love, they are Thine own.  
Come, for they need Thee ! lay Thy bleeding heart  
Against theirs broken ; make their love a part  
Of Thy love—let them weep their tears with Thine ;  
Pour out to Thee the woe that makes divine,  
Not of the world, their lives. These who have  
given

And lost their love without a hope of heaven,  
Will see Thee coming from the bitter ways  
And deserts, from the life of wasted days,  
Footweary, bearing within a burden wrought  
Of every man's refusal. God having sought  
Love in each offered prayer ; Christ having tried  
The door of every heart for love, and cried  
Sorely and waited ; Man having taken Thy stand  
In each man's path, and begged for love with hand

---

Out-held, begging for bread, now clothed withal  
In shreds, the greatest beggar, yea, in all  
The world, since only shreds Thy robes will be  
Of love the world could give—these will see  
Thee coming, and run and fetch Thee to their home,  
And Thou shalt rest at last. When Thou art come,  
These will bring water, greet Thee with a kiss,  
Share the last crust with Thee ; Thou shalt not miss  
The love Thou seek'st in vain, for falling down,  
Breaking the precious vessel of their own  
Tear-laden hearts upon Thy weary feet,  
So they will wash and ease them with the sweet  
Weeping of all their lives ; and it may be  
That I, having shown men things they will not see,  
Having spoken to the unreplying soul  
Of man and woman, having poured out the whole  
Vain-ruined heaven within me on the snows  
And deathly ways of life, shall be of those  
Sitting alone at last, whom eyes Thou,  
Before whose effigy men falsely bow,

Ever rejecting Thee, wilt come a-thirst,  
A-hungered, greatest, saddest, most accurst  
Of all the world, and have that hopeless last  
Outpouring of our hearts ; and as we cast  
Our fallen, piteous look at Thy bent head,  
Thou mayst be known in breaking of our last bread  
To me and them ! O keep that dying tryst !  
Come unto those when Thou return'st, O Christ !  
Having loved others, shall they not love Thee ?  
Come ! Thou shalt save perchance that few and me.  
  
But avoid the Cardinal's palace : seeing Thee poor,  
His serving-men may drive Thee from the door.

## *EN SOPH.*

### PART I.

#### *Prayer of the Soul on Entering Human Life.*

**E**N SOPH, uncomprehended in the thought  
Of man or angel, having all that is  
In one eternity of Being brought  
Into a moment : yet with purposes,  
Whence emanate those lower worlds of Time,  
And Force, and Form, where man, with one wing caught  
In clogging earth, angels in freer clime,  
From partial blindness into partial sight,  
Strive, yearn, and, with an inward hope sublime,  
Rise ever ; or, mastered by down-dragging might,  
And groping weakly with an ill-trimmed light,  
Sink, quenched ;

En Soph was manifest, as dim  
And awful as upon Egyptian throne  
Osiris sits ; but splendour covered Him ;  
And circles of the Sephiroth tenfold,  
Vast and mysterious, intervening rolled.

And lo ! from all the outward turning zones,  
Before Him came the endless stream of souls  
Unborn, whose destiny is to descend  
And enter by the lowest gate of being.  
And each one coming, saw, on written scrolls  
And semblances that he might comprehend,  
The things of Life and Death and Fate—which seeing,  
Each little soul, as quivering like a flame  
It paled before that splendour, stood and prayed  
A piteous, fervent prayer against the shame  
And ill of living, and would so have stayed  
A flame-like emanation as before,  
Unsullied and untried. Then, as he ceased

---

The tremulous supplication, full of sore  
Foreboding agony to be released

From going on the doubtful pilgrimage  
Of earthly hope and sorrow, for reply

A mighty angel touched his sight, to close,  
Or nearly close, his spiritual eye,

So he should look on luminous things like those  
No more till he had learned to live and die.

And when the pure bright flame, my soul, at last

Passed there in turn, it flickered like them all;  
But oh ! with some surpassing sad forecast

Of more than common pains that should befall  
The man whose all too human heart has bled

With so much love and anguish until now,  
And has not broken yet, and is not dead,

And shaken as a leaf in autumn late,  
Tormented by the wind, my soul somehow

Found speech and prayed like this against my Fate :



The pure flame pent within the fragile form

Will writhe with inward torments ; blind desires,  
Seizing, will whirl me in their frenzied storm,

Clutching at shreds of heaven and phantom fires.

A voice, in broken ecstasies of song,

Awakening mortal ears with its high pain,  
Will leave an echoing agony along

The stony ways and o'er the sunless plain,  
While men stand listening in a silent throng.

And all the silences of life and death,

' Like doors closed on the thing my spirit seeks,  
Importuning each in turn, will freeze the breath

Upon my lips, appal the voice that speaks ;  
Until the silence of a human heart

At length, when I have wept there all my tears,  
Poured out my passion, given my stainless part

Of heaven to hear what maybe no man hears,  
Will work a woe that never can depart.

---

Oh, let me not be parted from the light !

Oh, send me not to where the outer stars

Tread their uncertain orbits, growing less bright,

Cycle by cycle ; where, through narrowing bars,

The soul looks up and scarcely sees the throne

It fell from ; where the stretched-out Hand that  
guides

On to the end, in that dull slackening zone

Reaches but feebly ; and where man abides,

And finds out heaven with his heart alone.

I fear to live the life that shall be mine

Down in the half lights of that wandering world,

Mid ruined angels' souls that cease to shine,

Where fragments of the broken stars are hurled,

Quenched to the ultimate dark. Shall I believe,

Remembering, as of some exalted dream,

The life of flame, the splendour that I leave ?

For, between life and death, shall it not seem

The fond false hope my shuddering soul would weave

I dread the pain that I shall know on earth.

Give me another heart, but not that one  
That cannot cease to suffer from its birth

With love, with grief, with hope ; that will not shun  
One human sorrow ; that will pursue, indeed,

With tears more piteous than the woes they weep,  
Hearts which, soon comforted, will leave to bleed

My heart on all the thorns of life. Oh, keep  
That life from me—let me some other lead !

I fear to love as I shall love down there ;

It is not like the changeless heavenly love.  
I see a woman as an angel fair,

And know that I shall set her face above  
All other hope or memory. Day by day,—

Ah, through what agonies and what despair !—  
My soul's eternity will melt away

In following her. O God ! I cannot bear  
The passionate griefs I see along my way !

---

I shall not keep her ; and I fear the grave  
Where she will lie at last ; for though my soul  
Would yearn to wreck itself, yea, even to save  
Her earthly perishable beauty whole,  
I shall but pray to lie down at her side  
And mingle with her dust, dreaming no dream,  
Unless we wander hand in hand or hide,  
Hopeless, together by some phantom stream---  
Lost souls in human lives too sorely tried.

So prayed I, feeling even as I prayed  
● Torments and fever of a strange unrest  
Take hold upon my spirit, fain to have stayed  
In the eternal calm, and ne'er essayed  
The perilous strife, the all too bitter test  
Of earthly sorrows, fearing—and ah ! too well—  
To be quite ruined in some grief below,  
And ne'er regain the heaven from which I fell.  
But then the angel smote my sight—'twas so  
I woke into this world of love and woe.

*EN SOPH.*

PART II.

*Last Prayer of the Soul.*

AFTER a few short years of feverish being  
On earth, years all so swiftly flown, I seemed  
To have filled them with a madness, as one seeing  
No goal, but rushing on for something dreamed  
Or lost, torn past endurance of an earthly frame  
By griefs and angers and some brief-snatched bliss  
More cruel, and with no stay for praise or blame,  
Or thought of whether righteous or amiss  
I did, only the roaring loud within  
Of two great contrary voices loud in strife  
The momentary prevalence to win;  
Some last turn on the heated path of life

Brought me most suddenly before a door,

Dark and a mystery in the narrow way,

With look of nothing known to me before.

Only a moment had I then to stay,

Appalled : the latest frenzies of the blood

And o'erwrought heart abating rapidly,

Ere with me, overmastering me, there stood

One greater than in its weak humanity

My soul could comprehend, He touched the  
gloom

Of that closed door gigantic, the latest bar  
Of iron earthliness, the body's tomb.

It opened noiseless : and for sight too far  
I seemed to gaze, while feeling all his will

That I should enter or go out thereby,  
And that above my head a moment still

As 'twere his other hand was raised on high.  
But through quick inward change that brought  
mind

Neglected knowledge, sudden flashing bright

---

Of flames burnt down or darkened, as one blind

A dream's space<sup>e</sup> I began to see, with sight

Not of the failing eye, but such as thought

And memory use, the ample image unfailing

And look within. I saw my life as nought

In the eternity of spirit prevailing

Before and after; a moment's dream delayed

In the dense meshes of a slackening zone,

Where lights are scarce and wandering, or they fade

In some remote cessation. Clear my own

I saw an ever-brightening upward way,

Through finer-growing ocean and atmosphere,

The widening spirits' habitation lay

Open before me, and the mystery near ;

Breaking a new-found revelation to my soul

Of that which, all beyond an angel's scope,

Tried me ; and, farther than a star may roll

Unsundered from its sun, sent me to grope

Among the griefs and stumble o'er the graves

Of man's wrecked realm, yet drew me like a breath

---

Through all-dark walls and intervenig waves,  
And clogging heaviness of life and death,  
Back to His bosom of ineffable calm,  
And splendour of the soul's eternal source.

Yet, while that moment lasted, the disease  
Of life was on me ; its arrested course  
My blood resumed and to my heart returned,  
The latest fit of agony suspended,  
At sudden shock. The unwrought purpose burned  
Once more in all my being, with the blended  
Fires and energies of love and grief,  
Intense desire, and bitterness of hate.



*FALLEN FLOWERS.*

**O**NE of the workers of the world  
Living toiled, and toiling died ;  
But others worked and the world went on,  
And was not changed when he was gone,  
A strong arm stricken, a wide sail furled ;  
And only a few men sighed.

One of the heroes of the world  
Fought to conquer, then fought to fail,  
And fell down slain in his blood-stained mail,  
And over his form they stept ;  
His cause was lost and his banner furled ;  
And only a woman wept.

---

One of the singers among mankind  
Sang healing songs from an o'erwrought heart ;  
But ere men listened, the grass and wind  
Were wasting the rest unsung like a wave ;  
And now of his fame that will ne'er depart  
He has never heard in his grave.

One of the women who only love,  
Loved and grieved and faded away—  
Ah me ! are these gone to the God above,  
What more of each can I say ?  
They are human flowers that flower and fall,  
This is the song and the end of them all.

*AT HER GRAVE.*

I HAVE stayed too long from your grave, it seems,  
Now I come back again.

Love, have you stirred down there in your dreams

Through the sunny days or the rain?

Ah no ! the same peace ; you are happy so ;

And your flowers, how do they grow ?

Your rose has a bud : is it meant for me ?

Ah, little red gift put up

So silently, like a child's present, you see

Lying beside your cup !

And geranium leaves—I will take, if I may,

Two or three to carry away.

I went not far. In yon world of ours

Grow ugly weeds. With my heart,

'Thinking of you and your garden of flowers

I went to do my part,

Plucking up where they poison the human wheat

The weeds of cant and deceit.

'Tis a hideous thing I have seen, and the toil

Begets few thanks, much hate ;

And the new crop only will find the soil

Less foul, for the old 'tis too late.

I come back to the only spot I know

Where a weed will never grow.

*GROWING ON A GRAVE.*

L'OVE, on your grave in the ground  
Sweet flowers I planted are growing ;  
Lilies and violets abound,  
Pansies border it round,  
And cowslips, all of my sowing ;  
A creeper is trying to cover  
Your name with a kiss like a lover.

Dear, on your grave, in my heart,  
Grow flowers you planted when living,  
Memories that cannot depart,  
Faith in life's holier part,  
Love, all of your giving ;  
And Hope, climbing higher, is surer  
To reach you as life grows purer

*A PARABLE OF GOOD DEEDS.*

A WOMAN, sweet, but humble of estate,  
Had suddenly, by Providence or fate,  
Good fortune ; for a rich man made her wife,  
And raised her to a high and sumptuous life,  
With gold to spare and pleasurable things.  
Himself being great, in the employ of kings,  
Earning an ample wage and fair reward,  
He led his days like any lord,  
That made him rank among that country's lords ;  
But little pity had he for the poor,  
Nor cared to help them : rather from his door  
Bidding his servants drive them shamefully,  
Till all knew better than from such as he  
To beg for food ; and only year by year

Some wanderer out of other lands drew near  
His hated house. Riches corrode the heart  
That hath not its own sweetness set apart.  
But in his wife no inward change was wrought—  
Sweet she remained, and humble in her thought.  
And lo, one day, when, at the king's behest,  
This man was gone, there came and asked for rest  
A certain traveller, sad and very worn  
With wayfaring, whose coat, ragged and torn  
By rock and bramble, showed the fashion strange  
Of distant countries where the seasons change  
A different way, and men and customs too  
Are strange ; and though the woman hardly knew  
His manner of speech, seeing his weary face,  
She thought of toiling kinsfolk in the place  
Where she was born, and knew what heaviness  
It was to fare all day beneath the stress  
Of burning suns, and never stay to slake  
The bitter thirst or lay one down to take  
A needful rest, the natural due of toil ;

So she dealt kindly, and gave wine and oil,  
And bade the stranger comfort him and stay  
And sleep beneath that roof upon his way :  
That hour the sweetness of her fettered soul  
Was like the stored-up honey of a whole  
Summer in one rich hive ; and secretly  
She wept for joy to think that she might be  
Helpful to one in need. So when her lord  
Returning chided her, she bore his word  
Meekly, and in her spirit had content.

A long while after that, a poor man, bent  
And weak with hunger, wandered there, and prayed  
A little succour for God's sake, who made  
The rich and poor alike, and every man  
To love his fellow. But the servants ran  
And beat him from the house, along the lane,  
Back to the common road. Ah ! with what pain  
She saw it, but durst never raise her voice



Against her husband's rule ! Then with no noise  
She went out from the house into the street,  
And, like a simple serving-maid, bought meat  
And bread, and hurried to and fro to find  
And feed the starving man. That day the kind,  
Pitiful heart within her ached full sore,  
And much she grieved, thus little and no more  
'Twas hers to do to ease so great a woe,  
As home she went again, that none might know.  
Then at another time it chanced that one,  
Whose brother, if 'twas truth he told, had run  
Into the den of robbers unawares,  
And lay a prisoner, sought that house of theirs,  
Having fared thus and thus with others first,  
To gather gold enough to go and burst  
His bonds. And lo ! her husband gave him nought,  
But bade him lie again to those he caught  
With such a shallow tale. But she was stirred  
Greatly within ; and rather would have erred,  
And been a trickster's dupe, than let depart,

---

Unhelped, a brother with a bleeding heart.  
And so when none was nigh, she gathered all  
The store of gifts and gold that she could call  
Her own, and gave it to the man. Ah dear  
And blissful seemed that brother's thanks to hear.

A good wife with her husband now some span  
Of years she dwelt, and had one fair child born,  
And life grew easier to her every morn ;  
For living with such sweetness day by day,  
The hardest heart will change, and put away  
Some of its meanness. So it did not fail  
But that her husband softened, and the tale  
Of poor folks' wrongs would strike upon his ear  
With a new sound that once he could not hear.

At length he died, and riches with him ceased ;  
The king's pay came no more, and scarce released  
From greedy creditors, when all was sold,  
The woman and the child with little gold,

A meagre sum against hard want and shame,  
Went forth to find<sup>e</sup> the land from whence she came.  
The world was drear to them, and very hard,  
E'en as to others. Luckless or ill-starred  
Their wanderings seemed. One day their gold was  
    spent,  
    <sup>e</sup>  
And helpless, in a sad bewilderment,  
The woman sat her down in sore distress  
In the lone horror of the wilderness.

Then the child cried for food, and soon again  
More piteously for drink, and all in vain.

And the poor woman's heart of love was wrung  
With agony ; all hopelessly she hung  
Her head upon her breast, and said 'Ah me !  
Life is no longer, child, for such as we ;  
For I am penniless, and men give nought  
To those that cannot buy !'

Then there was brought  
An answer in her ear which said, ' Not so,  
But thou art even rich : look up and know !'  
Therewith she looked and saw three persons, fair  
And shining as God's angels, standing there  
Beside her in the way.

One gave the child  
Drink from a jewelled cup ; one held high, piled  
With richest foods and fruit, a goodly tray,  
And bade him eat ; the third did stoop and lay  
A purse upon her lap, the gold in which  
Sufficient was to make a poor man rich.  
And when o'erwhelmed with joy, and in amaze,  
Seeing the loveliness beyond all praise  
Of those three persons, on her knees she sank  
To worship them for angels, and to thank  
The God that sent them to her in her need,  
' They said, ' O woman, kneel not to us indeed,  
But thank thyself ; for we were wrought by thee,

And this the loveliness that thou dost see,  
Half wondering, 's thine own, the very light  
And beauty of thy soul, for just so bright  
We are as thou didst make us ; and at last  
Dost thou not know us ? is all memory past  
Of three good deeds that in prosperity  
Thou didst ? Those three good deeds of thine are

And then they walked before her, and she went  
And found her home, and lived in great content.

*A FALLEN HERO.*

THEY found him dead upon the battle-field.

One said, 'A hard man, and with scarce a  
heart ;

There lay his strength, a man who could not yield.

For, after all, too many, playing a part  
Of judge or warrior in the world, strong-armed,  
Or with the mental sinews stoutly set  
To the far-reaching thought, have faltered, charmed  
To softness and half purpose when they met  
The sweet appeal of individual lives,  
Or vanquished by the look of wounded foes.

This man was iron. Who has striven strives

Where the cause leads him ; where that is, who  
knows ?

Content with partial good the cooler crowd,  
Using its heroes, steps aside, well served,  
Waits for another ; and the applause, so loud,  
So general once, grows fainter—more reserved  
Around his steps who, holding first the flag  
In a well-honoured fight, is left to wage  
The war alone, above him a red rag  
With now his name upon it. So, 'twas a rage  
Urged this man on ; good, evil, grew but in dreams,  
The changeless opposites ; and to comrades, shamed  
Or timely fallen away, the man now seems  
Well-nigh the contrary of the thing he named.'

Another said, ' Ay, seems to such as these  
Who fought for half the goal—the goal was good,  
Immense, remote, a blessing that may ease  
The world some ages hence ; half-way was food,  
Content, a crumb for lesser lives to gain :  
He gained and spurned it to them. For the rest,

---

• The future man may count his death not vain,  
Finding him in Time's strata, as with crest  
Frenzied and straining jaws and limbs, some old  
Imbedded dragon lies defiant still  
In an unfinished fight. If such pass cold  
Mid the dwarfed folk whose generations fill  
Their striding steps, their soul is all the sun  
Gilding the dawn and lengthening out the span  
Of yet unrisen days, when men may run  
To greater heights and distances of man.'

• A third said, 'Yet to fall, as this one hath,  
Not with the earlier laurel newly earned,  
Nor having cleared the later doubtful path,  
But with a red sword firmly clutched and turned  
Against the heart of his time, is no fair fate.

He who now drives a hundred men to death  
Is bound to show the thousand saved ; else hate  
And scorn will quickly blow him such a breath  
No flowers will grow about his memory,



No goodly praise sit well upon his name.  
The men, who for his shadow could not see  
The peaceful sun of half their days, cry shame  
Against him ; lives he stinted of their love,  
Denying his own, lopping the tender boughs  
And leaflets that the trunk might rise above  
Its fellows, spoil the glory on his brows,  
Accuse him just as surely with their tears  
And ruin as with words that seemed too weak.

‘ Better, perhaps, out of the hopes and fears  
That round the generation’s life, to speak  
And win assent of every lesser man,  
Or, fighting, only wrest from that dark foe,  
The Future, jealous holding all she can  
For hers unborn, some moderate trophy, no  
Abiding portion ; dazzled, men will praise,  
While that great gift the dream-led seeker strives  
To gain and give them, scarcely they may raise  
Their hearts to the great love of all their lives.’

---

So spake they round one fallen in a fight,

Whence most had turned away, deeming the good  
A doubtful one, the further path too rife

With thrusts across the common ground, where stood  
Friend and foe mingled. Half praise, almost blame

One and another uttered, as they gazed  
Down at the dead set face, and named the name

That once upon their foremost banner blazed,  
But late flashed fitfully on distant quest

Strained past endurance. Bitterness still wrought  
Somewhat within their hearts, or memory prest

Maybe upon them with some late look fraught  
With passing scorn, and these—the feet that rushed

Onward, too reckless of weak lives that hide  
Along the wayside of the world—had crushed.

But lo! a woman wrung her hands and cried,

‘ Ah, my beloved ! ah, the good, the true ! ’

And clasped him lying on the ground, and kept

Her arms about him there. She only knew  
The passion of the man, and when he wept.

*IN THE OLD HOUSE.*

**I**N the old house where we dwelt  
No care had come, no grief we knew,  
No memory of the Past we felt,  
No doubt assailed us when we knelt;  
It is not so in the new.

In the old house where we grew  
From childhood up, the days were dreams,  
The summers had unwonted gleams,  
The sun a warmer radiance threw  
Upon the stair. Alas ! it seems  
All different in the new !

Our mother still could sing the strain  
In earlier days we listened to ;

---

The white threads in her hair were few,  
She seldom sighed or suffered pain.  
Oh for the old house back again !  
It is not so in the new.

*S I L E N C E S.*

*To ———*

'TIS a world of silences. I gave a cry  
In the first sorrow my heart could not with-  
stand ;

I saw men pause, and listen, and look sad,  
As though an answer in their hearts they had ;  
Some turned away, some came and took my hand,  
For all reply.

I stood beside a grave. Years had passed by ;  
Sick with unanswered life I turned to death,  
And whispered all my question to the grave,  
And watched the flowers desolately wave,  
And grass stir on it with a fitful breath,  
For all reply.

---

I raised my eyes to heaven ; my prayer went high  
    Into the luminous mystery of the blue ;  
My thought of God was purer than a flame  
And God it seemed a little nearer came,  
    Then passed ; and greater still the silence grew,  
For all reply.

But you ! If I can speak before I die,  
    I spoke to you with all my soul, and when  
I look at you 'tis still my soul you see.  
Oh, in your heart was there no word for me ?  
    All would have answered had you answered then  
With even a sigh.

*LYNMOUTH.*

I HAVE brought her I love to this sweet place,  
Far away from the world of men and strife  
That I may talk to her a charmèd space,  
And make a long rich memory in my life.

Around my love and me the brooding hills,  
Full of delicious murmurs, rise on high,  
Closing upon this spot the summer fills,  
And over which there rules the summer sky.

Behind us on the shore down there the sea  
Roars roughly, like a fierce pursuing hound ;  
But all this hour is calm for her and me ;  
And now another hill shuts out the sound.

---

And now we breathe the odours of the glen,  
And round about us are enchanted things ;  
The bird that hath blithe speech unknown to men,  
The river keen, that hath a voice and sings.

The tree that dwells with one ecstatic thought,  
Wider and fairer growing year by year,  
The flower that flowereth and knoweth nought,  
The bee that scents the flower and draweth near.

Our path is here, the rocky winding ledge  
That sheer o'erhangs the rapid shouting stream ;  
Now dips down smoothly to the quiet edge,  
Where restful waters lie as in a dream.

The green exuberant branches overhead  
Sport with the golden magic of the sun,  
Here quite shut out, here like rare jewels shed  
To fright the glittering lizards as they run.



---

And wonderful are all those mossy floors  
Spread out beneath us in some pathless place,  
Where the sun only reaches and outpours  
His smile, where never a foot hath left a trace.

And there are perfect nooks that have been made  
By the long growing tree, through some chance  
turn  
Its trunk took; since transformed with scent and  
shade,  
And filled with all the glory of the fern.

And tender-tinted wood flowers are seen,  
Clear starry blooms and bells of pensive blue,  
That lead their delicate lives there in the green—  
What were the world if it should lose their hue?

Even o'er the rough out-jutting stone that blocks  
The narrow way some cunning hand hath strewn  
The moss in rich adornment, and the rocks  
Down there seem written thick, with many a rune.

• And here, upon that stone, we rest awhile,  
For we can see the lovely river's fall,  
And wild and sweet the place is to beguile  
My love, and keep her till I tell her all.

• The thing I have to tell her is so great,  
The words themselves would seem of little worth ;  
But here grand voices at my bidding wait ;  
The torrent is my heart, and roars it forth.

• I take my love's hand ; looking in her eyes,  
I strive to speak, but the thought grows too vast—  
Lo ! a bird helps me out with it ; she sighs ;  
Sing on, sweet bird, 'twill reach her heart at last !

Oh, torrent, say thou art this heart of mine,  
Strong, rapid, overwhelming ; I will break  
Life's very rocks with rage akin to thine,  
And vanquish, ever striving for her sake.

Oh, bird, sing thou art even the voice my heart  
Will find to woo her life through day by day,

So that she hear<sup>ing</sup> never shall depart,  
And the long way shall seem a little way.

Oh, wandering river that my love and I  
Behold to-day through many a leafy screen,  
Tell her that life shall be a gliding by,  
A course like thine through this enchanted scene.

*EDEN.*

**W**EARY and wandering, hand in hand,  
Through ways and cities rough,  
And with a law in every land  
Written against our love,  
We set our hearts to seek and find,  
Forgotten now and out of mind,  
Lost Eden garden desolate,  
Hoping the angel would be kind,  
And let us pass the gate.

We turned into the lawless waste,  
Wild outer gardens of the world—  
We heard awhile our footsteps chased,  
Men's curses at us hurled ; -

But safe at length, we came and found,

Open with ruined wall all round,

Lost Eden garden desolate ;

No angel stood to guard the ground

At Eden garden gate.

We crossed the flower-encumbered floor,

And wandered up and down the place,

And marvelled at the open door

And all the desolate grace ;

And beast and bird with joy and song

That broke man's laws the whole day long ;

For all was free in Eden waste :

There seemed no rule of right and wrong,

No fruit we might not taste.

Our hearts, o'erwhelmed with many a word

Of bitter scathing, human blame,

Trembled with what they late had heard,

And fear upon us came,

---

Till, finding the forbidden tree,  
We ate the fruit, and stayed to see  
    If God would chide our wickedness ;  
No God forbade my love and me  
    In Eden wilderness.

The rose has overgrown the bower  
    In lawless Eden garden waste,  
The eastern flower and western flower  
    \* Have met and interlaced ;  
The trees have joined above and twined  
And shut out every cruel wind  
    That from the world was blown :  
Ah, what a place for love to find  
    Is Eden garden grown !

The fair things exiled from the earth  
    Have found the way there in a dream  
The phoenix has its fiery birth  
    And nests there in the gleam ;

Love's self, with draggled rainbow wings,  
At rest now from his wanderings,  
In Eden beds and bowers hath lain  
So long, no wealth of worldly kings  
Will win him back again.

And now we need not fear to kiss ;  
The serpent is our playfellow,  
And tempts us on from bliss to bliss,  
No man can see or know.  
Love was turned out of Eden first  
By God, and then of man accurst ;  
And fleeing long from human hate,  
And counting man's hard laws the worst,  
Returned to Eden gate.

Now every creature there obeys  
Exuberantly his lawless power ;  
The wall is overthrown, the ways  
Ruined by bird and flower ;

## *EDEN.*

---

The nuptial riot of the rose

Runs on for centuries and grows ;

The great heart of the place is strong—

It swells in overmastering throes

Of passionate sigh and song.

And while we joy in Eden's state,

Outside men serve a loveless lord ;

They think the angel guards the gate

With burning fiery sword !

Ah, fools ! he fled an age ago,

The roses pressed upon him so,

And all the perfume from within,

And he forgot or did not know ;

Eden must surely win.



*SONG.*

**W**HEN the Rose came I loved the Rose,  
And thought of none beside,  
Forgetting all the other flowers,  
And all the others died ;  
And morn and noon, and sun and showers,  
And all things loved the Rose,  
Who only half returned my love,  
Blooming alike for those.

I was the rival of a score  
Of loves on gaudy wing,  
The nightingale I would implore  
For pity not to sing ;

---

Each called her his ; still I was glad  
To wait or take my part ;  
I loved the Rose—who might have had  
The fairest lily's heart.

*FOLLOWING A DREAM.*

**I** SHOULD not follow a dream in vain,  
Loving, forsaking, loving again,  
If this one loved a little more,  
If that one sorrowed a little longer ;  
If red lips holier kisses bore,  
If passionate hearts were stronger.

I should not leave brown hair for gold,  
The warm and fair for the fair and cold,  
If one I loved ne'er loved again ;  
As years go by and loves grow fewer,  
I should not follow a dream in vain,  
If a beautiful woman were truer.

*KEEPING A HEART.*

*To M—— D——.*

**I**F one should give me a heart to keep,  
With love for the golden key,  
The giver might live at ease or sleep;  
It should ne'er know pain, be weary, or weep,  
The heart watched over by me.

I would keep that heart as a temple fair,  
No heathen should look therein ;  
Its chaste marmoreal beauty rare  
I only should know, and to enter there  
I must hold myself from sin.

I would keep that heart as a casket hid  
Where precious jewels are ranged,

A memory each ; as you raise the lid,  
You think you love again as you did  
Of old, and nothing seems changed.

How I should tremble day after day,  
As I touched with the golden key,  
Lest aught in that heart were changed, or say  
That another had stolen one thought away  
And it did not open to me.

But ah, I should know that heart so well,  
As a heart so loving and true,  
As a heart that I held with a golden spell,  
That so long as I changed not I could foretell  
That heart would be changeless too.

I would keep that heart as the thought of heaven,  
To dwell in a life apart,  
My good should be done, my gift be given,  
In hope of the recompense there ; yea, even  
My life should be led in that heart.

---

And so on the eve of some blissful day,  
    . From within we should close the door  
On glimmering splendours of love, and stay  
In that heart shut up from the world away,  
    Never to open it more.

*PROPHETIC SPRING.*

**T**O-DAY 'tis Spring ; the hawthorn-tree  
Is green with buds ; to-day maybe  
She whom I think of thinks of me,  
And finds the thought enough ;  
And when those buds are grown to leaves,  
That thought wherein she scarce believes  
Will grow perhaps to love.

Soon as the flowers of May appear,  
For love of me she will draw near,  
And hoping, dreading, I shall hear  
Perhaps, and own my bliss.  
Awhile beneath the hawthorn sweet  
Our o'erstrained quickening hearts will beat,

---

Our purple thirsting mouths will meet  
And revel in their kiss.

But when pink May becomes red June,  
And summer sounds a glorious tune,  
Under some lordlier tree aswoon  
Together we shall lie.

And then to-day's half-timid thought,  
May's thrill and kiss will seem as nought  
To the full joy we shall have taught  
Each other, she and I.



*A FALLING LEAF.*

**M**Y love is one of the falling leaves  
That flourished high in the blue,  
Taking part in the dreamwork the gossamer weaves  
Out of gauzy sunlight and dew ;  
My love believed what the spring believes,  
With nothing to promise it true :

And lived like a leaf, and rose so high  
On a topmost bough in the smiling sky,  
That it joyed, did my love, as the blithest may,  
Ay, joyed in its heaven of fond belief,  
In its hope, in its gossamer dream, as a leaf  
In its summer that passeth away.

---

And now that the sky is darkened and chill,

My love scarce dreams or believes :

My broken love, stay a moment still,

For a word, a token, a sound—

It trembles, it falls with the falling leaves,

It will die, one of them, on the ground.

*IF SHE BUT KNEW.*

**I**F she but knew that I am weeping  
Still for her sake,  
That love and sorrow grow with keeping  
Till they must break,  
My heart that breaking will adore her,  
Be hers and die ;  
If she might hear me once implore her,  
Would she not sigh ?

If she but knew that it would save me  
Her voice to hear,  
Saying she pitied me, forgave me,  
Must she forbear ?

---

If she were told that I was dying,

Would she be dumb?

Could she content herself with sighing?

Would she not come?

*BETWEEN TWO POSTS.*

**S**TAY with me, relic of the rose  
I gave her in love and June ;  
I knew she must send you back, I suppose,  
Some Autumn day, but the day she chose  
Seems many a day too soon.  
  
Silken-coffined you lay in her breast,  
And felt her heart grow cold,  
And so died slowly, at least soft-prest,  
Not as my heart dies now ; for the rest,  
'Tis much the same when told.  
  
A word may come, there may yet be room  
To hope and hold your troth ;  
Lie here at my heart and share its doom—  
If life, you may yet come forth from your tomb,  
If death, I have buried you both.

*A LOVE SYMPHONY.*

**A** LONG the garden ways just now  
I heard the flowers speak ;  
The white rose told me of your brow,  
The red rose of your cheek ;  
The lily of your bended head,  
The bindweed of your hair :  
Each looked its loveliest and said  
You were more fair.

I went into the wood anon,  
And heard the wild-birds sing,  
How sweet you were ; they warbled on,  
Piped, trilled the self-same thing.

Thrush, blackbird, linnet, without pause,  
The burden did repeat,  
And still began again because  
You were more sweet.

And then I went down to the sea,  
And heard it murmuring too,  
Part of an ancient mystery,  
All made of me and you.  
How many a thousand years ago  
I loved, and you were sweet—  
Longer I could not stay, and so  
I fled back to your feet.

*IN A BOWER.*

**A** PATH led hither from the house  
Where I have left your doubt and pain,  
O fettered days of all my past ;  
I lingered long, but came at last ;  
One lifting up of fragrant boughs,  
Then love was here and broke my chain  
With eager hands : the die is cast,  
No path leads back again.

Henceforth, cold tyrant of my heart,  
You rule no longer pulse or breath ;  
Love, with rich words and kisses hot,  
Has told me truth in this charmed sp<sup>m</sup>



And, though your hand this hour should part  
The leaves, I have no thought, but saith  
My life is Love's : I fear you not,  
Now you are only Death.

And Death creeps up the garden walks ;  
But Love hastes, winning more and more :  
My hands, my mouth are his, my hair,  
My breast, as all my first thoughts were ;  
Across the moonlit sward Death stalks ;  
But Love upon this flower-strewn floor  
Hath made me wholly his : ah, there !  
Death stands outside the door.

*A DUET: PIANO AND VIOLONCELLO.*

*Dedicated to M. Laserre.*

PIANO (*preluding*).

THERE is a land above the land where life  
Frets the dull chains of speech, and strains  
the ear,  
And wearies out the heart in passionate strife  
With sullen fate ; and there, released from fear  
And doubt, and putting off the earthly veil,  
The soul finds solitudes akin to those  
Her infinite sadnesses ; moonlit and pale  
Those pathways gleam : no sun ere rose  
On such receding shores ; but lengthening waves  
Of the soul's urgent ocean reach and break

Upon them, wailing round remembered graves  
Where buried lie the hopes she did forsake.

There with an infinite utterance, more than words,

I ask those things that never life hath found  
Response to ; there with stricken, grieving chords,

I mourn, I weep, I pour forth the great sound  
Of all the desolate groaning of my days,

Till an unearthly echo takes my soul,  
Become that sound, up into loftier ways,

Where it is almost bliss to bear my dole ;  
Or soon the luminous cloud-work of a dream

Hath wrapt me in its frail delicious heaven ;  
Or, rarely, one voice, gifted it would seem

With the sole tone to blend with mine, and even  
Out of its own great yearning answer me,

Hath wrought me such content through sweetest  
strain

Of lofty converse, that the end would be,

If not of joy, a sadness one were fain

To live and die with.—Ah, that voice again !

. VIOLONCELLO.

Thou call'st me then ! and dost thou not divine  
My soul hath longed for thine,  
Since last in rare exalted mood we met,  
And spake and sang and wept  
Things we can ne'er forget,  
Songs that our souls have kept,  
And tears that still combine ?

PIANO.

Whence com'st thou, soul that once so joyed with  
mine ?

VIOLONCELLO.

I lingered in Vienna, dreaming still  
Some rhapsodies to fill  
The aching years, and lift them from their grief.  
That grief, rememberest thou ?  
It is nor light nor brief ;  
Dost thou remember how  
Thine own tears wrought relief ?

PIANO.

Yea, grieving soul, and I would hear thee now.

VIOLONCELLO.

The thing I loved is lost for evermore !

I sing me o'er and o'er

The name thereof, and nothing answers me.

And year by year the earth,

And heaven and the sea,

Promise me nothing worth

In years that are to be.

I had a high belief that like a star

Made light for me afar,

Ruling life's cloudlands with a distant spell,

Now, or the darkness grows,

Or the star paled and fell, '

And only as a vision, my soul knows

That loftier thing that glorifies a day,

An hour, then fades away,—

---

Leaving a palace with the lights burned down,

A soul sitting in gloom,

Uncrowned that wore a crown,

A temple with no priest—a tomb.



THOUGHTS IN MARBLE.

*POEMS OF FORM.*





*HER BEAUTY.*

**I** KNEW that in her beauty was the healing  
Of sorrows, and the more than earthly cure  
Of earth-begotten ills man may endure,  
Gnawed on by cares, or blown by winds of feeling.  
For in her beauty was the clear revealing  
Of Truth ; and with the sight a man grew pure,  
And all his life and thinking steadfast, sure,  
As one before a shrine of Godhead kneeling.  
But then, alas ! I saw that she was made  
No whit less mortal, frail,—or she might miss  
Death—than the summer substance of a flower ;  
That on her beauty Death had even laid  
A touch, and in the distance called her his,  
And Time might steal her beauty every hour.

*A PRIEST OF BEAUTY.*

**L**OVE'S hard-earned grace I deem a scanty grace,  
And hardly given seems the bliss Love gave ;  
For not at all times, nor in every place,  
I have her whom I wholly seem to have,—  
But days of barrenness that are as weeks  
Divide the days of bliss that are as hours ;  
Brief weeks, I count for summers, my heart seeks,  
And, for one flower I gain, lose many flowers.

For is not this the Lady who is mine  
By all my winning, and by love's free hand ?  
Yea, for me only may she bloom or shine,  
Or deck herself : I only may command

---

That splendid spirit that abides in her,  
And makes her living form and look and voice,  
A temple, whose sole priest and minister  
I am by love's anointment and love's choice.

And lo ! how is it that, ere some brief night'  
Hath had in whole impassioned sacrifice,  
Through mystic incarnations of delight,  
Her beauty that no priesthood may suffice—  
How is it that some bitter envious morn  
Compels me from her—intense haloes yet  
Above her breasts, and many a joy unborn  
In places that no kissing hath made wet ?

How is it that long through the languid day,  
With broken memories of unfinished bliss,  
Soul torn from soul, heart from the heart its prey,  
Kiss-seeking lips, lips still a-thirst to kiss—  
Our reddening human flower rent in twain,  
We agonise and die back through each gate

Of bloom and raptured past made void and vain,  
For some supreme desire insatiate ?

Alas ! but all too oft, as though indeed  
Sad widowhood and no fair happy part  
With living lover were our fate decreed  
By Love—the famine fierce in eyes and heart—  
On either side the darkness, each to each  
We yearn and stretch vain hands forth and make  
moan,  
And frame fond words for ears they never reach,  
And weep in vain, and sorrow all alone.

Is this Love's royalty ? this all their state  
Who smile beneath his purples and his crown,  
His very favoured ones, whom all men rate ?  
Why am I not there when my Queen, my own,  
All sleepless on her couch lies burning white,  
Tossed with strange fevers, spent with strange  
unrest,

---

Beneath some waning lamp's pale opal light,  
Sick of her sweet limbs many times,arest ?

Why am I not there when the amber morn  
Brings her its gift of fragrance all diffused,  
Repaints her lip and sets there newly born—  
The honeyed store of kisses, to be used  
That day, my Love thinks—as new blushes haste  
To fill her face's flower from her heart's core—  
Alas ! nay, rather, to lie there, and waste,  
Just like the kisses of the day before ?

Why am I not there ?—yea, for that hour's share  
Of what should be my daily life-long bliss,  
Her sight beloved—when, without shame or care,  
She gives her body to the clinging kiss  
Of waters that no memory preserve  
Or impress of her beauty on their wave—  
I who, for one sight of her side's fair curve,  
Shall think of her for ever in my grave ?

She lingers with her fairness, a warm eye  
    Worshipping all the unstained loveliness  
Of her white self, smiling at smiles that lie  
    Hid in each rosy dimple that felt press  
Some white tooth of the water—feeling joy  
    That she is even thus ; till the sweet throng  
Of effortless desires weary and cloy  
    With aching thought of days empty and long.

Truly, if any sight or kiss or sense  
    Be in the air and light of day, the touch  
Of waters, the night's jealous prevalence,  
    Yea, all life's common ministers—then such  
As these are they that have her and that learn  
How sweet she is, not I who have their right :  
Some coldest maid, her fellow, shall quite earn  
    More than I to be with her day and night.

Most bitter is it : for the world, ay, space  
    And times and duties and men's envious will

---

Are ever between me and my love's place,  
That, having her, I should be joyless still,  
As though I had her not. Ah, curse this wrong !  
And oftentimes, when I haste to see her most,  
Some jealous robe hath held from me too long  
That beauty all my life hath too long lost.

Shall these things be so, Love?—where is thy spell ?  
What care I now to do as others do ?  
Have I not honoured thee and served thee well ?  
Cannot some lightning-shaft of thine break through  
These shames?—or, make the world by night and day  
Translucent to me, walls of things and space :  
That robe too—so I see my love alway,  
Bathe myself alway in her perfect grace ?

That beauty of my Lady, meant for me—  
That mortal gold no heaven can e'er repay ;  
My mortal life—is plundered secretly  
By Death and Time ; ay, every passing day



Is' ravishing what all my soul holds dear.

Each hour contends with me for what is mine,  
And every moment—yea, in every year—  
Spoileth some part of her for whom I pine.

. How doth it profit me that in her—veiled  
Beneath some robe—all miracles are met ;  
That forming hands long-striving once prevailed  
In her ? What life scarce tastes, death may forget.  
How doth it profit me she is so fair,  
My Lady, though all women should concur  
There is no one for envy who durst bare  
Her paler charms?—how doth it profit her?

Yea, her and me, how profiteth, alas,  
This love, this loveliness of her divine ?  
Fooled by dull fates, we let the fair days pass  
In which Time's miracle hath made her mine.  
And, ah ! I can but think in what slight space  
She shall be lost to time and love and me :

---

Shall I but find her once in any place

Quite on through all the bare eternity ?

Shall not some gnawing voice of great regret,

Down in the grave, be taunting me for aye ?

Saying, Thou hadst her, was her beauty set

Like holy flame before thee night and day ?

Didst thou well use the moments—seeing so brief

Was life—to fill thine eyes with her, to throng

Thy heart with her ? If not, great is thy grief :

Thou canst not do it now—and Death is long !

*LIVING MARBLE.*

**W**HEN her large, fair, reluctant eyelids fell,  
And dreams o'erthrew her blond head  
    mutinous,  
That lollingly surrendered to the spell  
    Of sleep's warm death, whose tomb is odorous  
    And made of recent roses ; then unchid  
I gazed more rapturously than I may tell  
On that vain-hearted queen with whom I dwell,  
    The wayward Venus who for days hath hid  
    Her peerless, priceless beauty, and forbid,  
With impious shames and child-like airs perverse,  
    My great, fond soul from worshipping the sight  
    That gives religion to my day and night—  
Her shape sublime that should be none of hers.

---

\* \* \* \* \*

The wonder of her nakedness, unspoiled  
By fear or feigning, showed each passionate limb  
In reckless grace that failed not nor recoiled ;  
And all the sweet, rebellious body, slim,  
Exuberant, lay abandoned to the whim  
And miracle of unabashed repose.  
I joyed to see her glorious side left bare,  
Each snow-born flow'ret of her breast displayed,  
One white hand vaguely touching one red rose,  
One white arm gleaming through thick golden hair.  
I gazed ; then broke the marble I had made,  
And yearned, restraining heart and holding breath,  
That sleep indeed were endless, even as death.

*BLACK MARBLE.*

**S**ICK of pale European beauties spoiled  
By false religions, all the cant of priests  
And mimic virtues, far away I toiled

In lawless lands, with savage men and beasts.  
Across the bloom-hung forest, in the way  
Widened by lions or where the winding snake  
Had pierced, I counted not each night and day,  
Till, gazing through a flower-encumbered brake,  
I crouched down like a panther watching prey—  
Black Venus stood beside a sultry lake.

The naked negress raised on high her arms,  
Round as palm-saplings ; cup-shaped either breast,

---

Unchecked by needless shames or cold alarms,  
    Swelled, like a burning mountain, with the zest  
Of inward life, and tipped itself with fire :  
    Fashioned to crush a lover or a foe,  
        Her proud limbs owned their strength, her waist  
            its span,  
Her fearless form its faultless curves. And lo !—  
    The lion and the serpent and the man  
    Watched her the while with each his own desire

*THE LINE OF BEAUTY.*

**W**HEN mountains crumble and rivers all run  
dry,

When every flower has fallen and summer fails

To come again, when the sun's splendour pales,  
And earth with lagging footsteps seems well-nigh

Spent in her annual circuit through the sky ;

When love is a quenched flame, and nought avails

To save decrepit man, who feebly wails

And lies down lost in the great grave to die ;

What is eternal ? What escapes decay ?

A certain faultless, matchless, deathless line,

Curving consummate. Death, Eternity,

Add nought to it, from it take nought away ;

'Twas all God's gift and all man's mastery,

God become human and man grown divine.

*PENTELICOS.*

**I**N dark days bitter between dream and dream,  
I go bowed down with many a load of pain,  
Increasing memory gathers to remain  
From paths where now, all snakelike, lurk and gleam  
Love's last deceits that loveliest did seem,  
Or hurrying on with hope and thought astrain,  
To reunite love's worn just broken chain,  
Whose links fall through my fingers in a stream ;  
When, sometimes, mid these semblances of love,  
Pursued with feverish joy or mad despair,  
There flashes suddenly on my unrest  
Some marble shape of Venus, high above  
All pain or changing, fair above all fair,  
Still more and more desired, still unpossess.



*PAROS.*

**W**HEN I took clay—with eager passionate hand  
Inspired by love—to mould the yielding curves  
Of all her shape consummate that deserves,  
Immortal in the sight of heaven, to stand ;  
Then, undismayed, as at a god's command,  
Laborious, with the obedient tool that serves  
The sculptor's mighty art and never swerves,  
Beside the crumbling form I carved the grand  
Imperishable marble. Henceforth—seeing  
The glory of her nakedness divine—  
My heart is raised, I bend the knee and deem her  
Not simply woman and not merely mine,  
But goddess, as the future age shall deem her,  
Ideal love of man's eternal being.

*CARRARA.*

**I** AM the body purified by fire ;  
A man shall look on me without desire,  
But rather think what miracles of faith  
Made me to trample without fear or scathe  
The burning shares ; the thick-set bristling paths  
Of martyrdom ; to lie on painful laths  
Under the torturer's malice ; to be torn  
And racked and broken, all-victorious scorn  
Strengthening the inward spirit to reject  
The frame of flesh, with sins and lusts infect,  
Whose punishment, like to the sin, was gross,  
And man the executioner. I arose  
Changed from those beds of pain, and shriven at last  
From the whole shameful history of the past—

Of earth-bound pride and revelry ; yea, shriven  
From Love, at first the one sin, and forgiven :  
Beauty that other, with the vanity  
That set me crowned before humanity ;  
So I was led, a priestess or a saint,  
Robed solemnly, leaving the latest taint  
Of earthliness in some far desert cell  
Ascetic ; and the hand late used to tell  
Rough rosaries, the hand for ever chilled  
With fingering the death-symbol, feels unthrilled  
With any passionate luxury forbidden  
The world's new wedlock. Man and woman chidden  
For all their life on earth wed timorously,  
And full of shames, fearing lest each should see  
The other's greater sin ; so they unite,  
Two penitential spirits, to take flight,  
In one ethereal vision sanctified,  
Two bodies for the grave. I am the bride  
Who clings with terror, suppliant and pale,  
And fears the lifting of her virgin veil,

---

Because the shrinking form, spite of her prayers,  
Has grown to know its earthliness, and bears  
The names of sins that gave up shameful ghosts  
On antique crosses. Raised now amid the hosts  
Of living men, my effigy is grown  
Passionless, speechless through the postured stone  
That holds one changeless meaning in its pose ;  
The murmuring myriads pass, and each man knows  
And sees me with a cold thought at his heart ;  
For I am that from which the soul must part.

*DIALOGUE BETWEEN TWO VENUSES.*

FIRST VENUS.

WITH me the soul's Eternity began,  
Before me wastes of waters were, and earth,  
And elemental agonies that ran  
Through human chaos, till my perfect birth  
Fulfilled the life and made the dream of man.

For I was with him in the foamless deep,  
Vaguely he saw me through glistening water,  
In the veined marble spell-bound or asleep,  
A goddess, and a woman, and a daughter,  
Of dreams, to make men joy henceforth, or weep.

A goddess when I stood upon the wave  
Green haloed further than all arms could reach ;  
A woman when I came to earth and clave  
Unto men's lives, filling the heart of each—  
Then died, and took the marble for a grave.

Until then Praxiteles, with passionate Art  
Sought me, and saw, and lifted me to strange  
Life, above life and death to stand apart,  
The one thing of the world that cannot change,  
The true religion of the human heart.

But what art thou, whom in the twilight time  
Lifted by faint or failing hands I see,  
Repeating timidly a form sublime ?

Whose chisel hath made mimicry of me  
In the cold quarries of what northern clime ?  
The mid-day sun caressing, warmed the soul,  
Long in unchiselled marble slumbering ;  
On gleaming shores that felt the rhythmic roll,

Of ancient azure waves : but thou pale thing,  
Wert wrought beneath some ghost light of the pole.

SECOND VENUS.

*(‘The Venus of Gibson.’)*

*I* am the pure ideal of a day  
Purer than thine. Long since men put away  
The ancient sin thou symbolest, and broke  
Love’s altars, and beat down his flower yoke ;  
No longer holding up his torch of flame  
Drags he the soul dishevelled, and with shame,  
A captive trampled with relentless feet.  
Nor leads it haltered, powerless of retreat.  
A weak, blindfolded child to consummate  
Base union with Desire ; nor a fate  
With eyes averted, and strong cruel hand  
Holding the shrivelled victim o’er the brand,  
Maybe consume it as a moth at length.  
A new and holier faith gave man new strength  
And Athens lies a ruin, the ancient crowned  
Passion-gods writhe as bitter serpents, bound

In the all-quenchless hell that gave them birth ;  
And priests of virtue have transformed the earth.

FIRST VENUS.

I hear the language of some Gothic lie,  
That like a darkness bred of one blown cloud  
Hath spread itself over man's azure sky,  
And his affrighted heart hath disavowed,  
The glory set before his soul on high.  
The poisoned moments of eclipse hath wrought  
His fair fruits bitter, and diseased his breath ;  
And in the sour ranklings of his thought,  
He hath tormented to a sense of death,  
The clear bright truth of life Love's self had taught.  
For on the sure swift pinions of desire  
The soul was wont to soar to every height  
Of heaven ; and in Love's hand the only fire  
Burnt upward, and in his hand the only light  
Shone for the soul to spring from and aspire.



And but a little higher than the heart,

A little further than the outstretched hand,

The very soul of man's soul, set apart

From all his shifting days, and toil by land

And sea, dwelt with him never to depart.

Sister, of all his thoughts, nowise he read

The marble meaning in my eyes of fate ;

Made one with him, and mystically wed,

His bride, he left me still immaculate,

Yet had content of me, and rests, being dead.

What fairer helpmate is there given to each

Still striving soul of man for joy and good

'Twixt birth and death ? What virtues can they teach

That were not perfect in my womanhood

Ere gods were known or there were priests to preach ?

For whoso looks on me is filled with faith,

And walks exalted in a transformed earth,

Worshipping alway, serving no mere wraith

Of dreaming, no frail vision's doubtful birth,  
Nor leaning on the word that any saith.

And I am the great love, no thing may shun  
My heart's warmth—as no flower can escape  
The fever from the centre of the sun—  
And I the single chastity, the shape  
Adored by all and never given to one.

SECOND VENUS.

A god of virtue walked upon the earth,  
And man repented him of love and mirth ;  
He looked upon the image he had made,  
And, lo ! 'twas naked ; then he grew afraid,  
And, with a righteous zeal, he overthrew  
The marbles of Praxiteles : they strew  
The trampled land of Greece ; the shameless stone  
Of Thespiæ fell, and grass of years has grown  
Over the broken Cnidian ; and that pride

Of Athens, Artemis, whose lips denied  
The kiss they seemed to covet—age by age  
The growing storm of man's ascetic rage  
Battered each sculptured fane, and burst upon  
The chiselled idols of the Parthenon  
With ruin ; and when the vengeful tide that surged,  
Stirred by the priests of man's new faith, had purged  
The world of Phidias' works, or only left  
Disordered remnants—goddesses bereft  
Of arms and feet, Apollo scarce divine,  
Marred of his manhood, Mercury supine,  
Headless Cephissus and maimed daughters three  
Of Cecrops—when the immortality  
Of marble, fashioned in the form of lust  
That once was Phryné, trodden into dust,  
No longer stood between him and the sky,  
Man put on sackcloth and rebuked the eye  
Because of sight, and chid the hand for touch,  
And chained the heart lest it should feel too much.

Henceforth the daily thought of heaven or hell,  
Chastened man's life ; almost he fears to dwell  
His perilous time of travail on the earth,  
Full of pollutions, knowing first his birth  
A shame done when the face of God was turned  
Away in wrath or pity, having earned  
His mortal right to labour with the hand  
Till the brow sweats as an accursed brand  
And punishment of sin ; fleeing, the while  
His sense is linked thereto, the deadly smile  
And lure of beauty, worker of his ill  
And sister of the serpent-temptress still,  
Through all his trembling and divided days.  
The sackcloth shrouds too in a thousand ways  
That fallen form, ere death with safe last gloom  
Hurries it to the darkness of the tomb—  
A rotting secret, recordless ; and shroud  
And death and the revilings long and loud  
Of priests, yea, and corroding sermons set  
In each man's heart, as 'twere a worm, to fret

Upon the earth ; these have so well combined,  
All men have passed the peril as though blind ;  
And the close veil that woman meekly wears,  
No hand hath raised for eighteen hundred years.

FIRST VENUS.

Man raves, and in the madness of his dreams  
A Moloch hath enslaved him ; covetous priests  
Have spoiled his good, and poisoned all his streams.  
He dare not sit at any of the feasts  
Of life, and, wholly darkened, he blasphemes  
The goddess giver of true holiness  
To all his days. If still his heart can find  
A little love ; if, in its abjectness,  
A glimmering light of truth lasts in his mind,  
So that he see not foul or meaningless ;  
Or, with distorted falsehood written o'er  
Its shining parable of faultless Form,  
Let him tear off the veil, and look once more

On woman, *white* divinity, of marble warm,  
With all of life, the soul hath waited for.

If he but see aright, in glory sweet,  
Unsullied by dull heresies or lust,  
Or vile invented shames designed to cheat  
The soul, and dwarf into degraded dust  
That truth in which God's heaven and man's earth  
meet,

He shall be healed. For the great purity  
Of the soft bosom, guileless in its rest,  
Yet holding all within the mystery  
That maketh man, shall show that God hath blest  
Birth and the secret of humanity.

And if he look upon the arms that hold  
And circle round the heaven of his bliss  
And the mouth with its lovelier gift that  
Stored in the consummation of a kiss  
Then he shall know he hath been false

Quoted by  
Sri Basant Ballav Sen  
9/1-A, New Bazaar, Calcutta 19  
NOT EXCHANGEABLE AND  
NOT SALABLE.

To count life's labour of relentless days

A cursed pain and punishment of sin.

Eternal light shall show the upward ways

Of toil, and man all holy entering in

Where heaven is earth's achievement and earth's praise.

And if he read in the revealing eyes

Looks of the spirit from the depths of time,

It shall be written in his heart what dies

Hopeless and lost, and what lives on sublime ;

Clouds shall be cast away and he shall rise,

Lifted by love, as on a wing or wave,

To luminous heights above the world and live,

Full of all great and deathless thoughts that save

From death ; so in no manner shall he give

His glory or his manhood to the grave.

Behold, moreover, if to the inward soul

Of any man there enter, to be known,

The presence of that Beauty, perfect whole,

Goddess and woman, reigning on a throne  
O'er all the thoughts and ways with sweet control.

If with surpassing revelation rare,  
The mystery of the one ineffable line,  
Transcending time and space, changelessly fair,  
Before and after all things, law divine  
Enter the soul and make religion there,

Then is man saved ; for in that soul's clear sight  
No falsehood or impurity shall stand ;  
That soul shall fashion darkness into light,  
And moulding human clay with holy hand,  
Exalt man pure upon a marble height.



*A VENUS.*

FALLEN from ancient Athens to the days  
When sculpture hides her forms beneath a shroud,  
I mingle sometimes with the bourgeois crowd  
Of rich church-going serious folk, to gaze  
On each demure-faced Venus who obeys  
The crabbed daily rule of some purse-proud  
Merchant or lawyer, graceless and bald-browed,  
Cheating abroad for what at home he pays.  
And marking well her beauty, which he bought  
With cunning eye ; I marvel is this she  
Whom Paris knew ? Does she not chafe at all ?  
And oftentimes sorely expiate in thought  
Her desecrated godhead, secretly  
Standing lone, white, upon some pedestal ?

*THE LAST LOOK.*

**L**ASTLY, an angel ushered me in haste  
Out through the sunrise. I beheld the  
earth

Setting behind me ; I beheld the Past  
Reddened with life and love, and knew the worth  
Of life itself, and love itself and time ;  
And of two women, there was one sublime  
Waiting in sadness, tears, and love, and faith,  
Clad brilliantly—crowned was that delicate wraith  
Of white immortal face, and haloed hair,  
Seen of remembered gold veiled in the fair  
White widowhood of many a holy year ;  
And her tried soul, transcendent now and clear,

Like the last summit, like a steadfast star,  
And merged into the lucent opening far  
Away in widening heaven.

Then I turned  
To seek that other, for whom life had burned  
So long unquenchably ; and dimly seen  
In dismal joys and anguish, that had been  
An altered shadow on a failing shore,  
Pained me awhile : then I looked back no more.

· *A FRAGMENT.*

**M**AN shall not die. The darkness in his brain,  
The canker at his heart, the ill of ages,  
Shall pass and leave him as a worn-out pain.

Life from her books shall tear a thousand pages,  
And like an unread record shall remain.

The history of his madness, when he fled  
Beauty, the soul's bride, set before his gaze,  
And followed necromantic ties to wed,

Death, with a lingering spousal all his days,  
Gnawed on by worms as though already dead.

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COLIBRI.



## *COLIBRI.*

### CANTO THE FIRST.

**D**EEP in the warm heart of Brazil  
There lay a diamond bright and still;  
The summers sinking through the ground,  
Dead flowers and some lost water-rill,  
Dim secrets of the earth profound,  
Long symphonies of all her sound  
These things enriched and nourished it  
With splendours of their infinite.  
And, through each dark terrestrial birth,  
Regenerating to the light,  
That quenchless star of central night  
Passed upward from the occult earth ;



Became an emanating dew,  
Bloomed forth a passion-flower, or flew  
A humming-bird with crimson-crest,  
Or melting in a virgin's breast,  
Made for her heart a diamond too.

Among the forest-folk that child  
Seemed a sweet wonder. Strange and wild  
From the first years she grew, as one  
With superhuman secrets, things  
Unspeakable ; who oft must shun  
Her people for far communings ;  
Having unclouded sights and clues  
Of swift ways to an unknown land  
Past all the trails their feet might use.  
A spell they could not understand  
Was with her, that she did begin  
To move unwontedly their hearts,  
And there was nought she might not win  
With her charmed smile and lovely arts.

Her fellow-children's forest-play  
Grew beautiful when she was there;  
The butterflies they chased would stay  
With blue wings closed, and seemed more rare  
And of a gaudier kind ; the way  
Led more resplendently along,  
Lit vividly with the forked ray  
The sun shot through the trees; and song  
And sweet, unbridled folly reigned,  
As though that day the summer bright  
Trebled with joyance unexplained.  
The children thought she had some might  
With all the glowing things, whose flight  
Was like an arrow's flash, or fair  
And buoyant on the rapturous air.  
They thought for her the flowers could talk,  
Each one upon its quivering stalk,  
In an enchanted tongue she knew  
And all day long was listening to ;  
And sure were they she was a queen

Far in the forest-lands unseen,  
Whence wondrous voices that they heard  
Shouted her many a magic word,  
Or sang or called confusedly.  
So that all through the radiant hour  
A sweet awe mingled with their glee,  
And they had called her Colibri,  
Thinking her brother was the bird  
Whose sister was the passion-flower.

Oft in the middle flush of sport  
She fled them waywardly, and went  
Smiling and singing, till the short  
Impenetrable paths that bent  
Inwardly through the trees were closed  
Behind the echoes of her song.  
But when all lovely she reposed  
In dense, sweet places where days long  
No foot drew near and no eye saw ;  
Where purple-scented stillness grew,

And red trees had not stirred, for awe  
Of the eternal thing they knew ;  
Strange richness of thought undivulged  
Would roll upon her heart, and dreams,  
In whose remote joy she indulged  
Until the warm day's yellowing beams  
Fell vaguely on her dazzled cheek.  
For soon within her there began  
To grow more thoughts than she could speak,  
Than she could show to any man,  
Sometimes for joy, sometimes for shame,  
Since they were measureless and vast  
As great blue skies, or went and came  
As troops of fair birds flying fast,  
Since each was stranger than the last,  
And none of them had yet a name.  
She could but feel the solitude  
Held something of their endless mood,  
That they were a mysterious part  
Of flower's sweet soul and bird's strong heart ;

She could but think it was a share  
Of her rich secrets that did gleam  
On many a bell-bloom red and fair ;  
And that in truth it was *her* dream  
The palms dreamed in the lofty air.

The forest voices great and sweet,  
The speaking, yea, and singing there,  
That seemed so often to repeat  
Some powerless murmur of her own,  
Were in a language better known  
Than any of her kindred's speech.  
And what those strange, sweet tongues could teach  
Her yielding spirit day by day  
Prevailed to lure her far away  
And ever farther : till she grew  
United more to each wild thing  
Of furtive foot or rushing wing,  
Than to the sister that she knew ;

And many a nameless flower had been  
With rich effusive spell between,  
Her and her mother's heart.

Her friends  
Were none else than the blue macaw,  
The troupial, whose long nest she saw  
Dragging down all the plantain's ends  
Close to the canes and swaying sedge  
Of every dim lake's hidden edge ;  
Or, more than these, the tanager,  
Whose bright eye had no fear of her ;  
She loved to hear the joyous stir  
He made among the leaves all round,  
And knew he followed her for miles  
About the forest, with swift bound  
Through sidelong ways and green defiles  
He only, or the lithe tree snake,  
Had skill to thread ; and, but for him,  
Sometimes she felt her heart would break  
With the great throng of thoughts so dim,

So wonderful and hard to speak,  
When, wɔtching his shape, vivid, slim,  
Ecstatic, she could well believe  
He too was bearing in his breast  
A secret rapture unconfest.  
And more and more she did conceive  
That all these in their several ways  
Were telling her for days and days  
Of one whose face she had not seen,  
Who surely some long while had been  
Roaming about the forest, felt  
By bird and flower, and many a time  
Dreamed of by her; strangely sublime  
And beautiful, with a great kind  
Of power and sweetness, such as dwelt  
Perchance in no one man. And still  
More than that dream she thought to find,  
Wandering with yet a mightier thrill  
Deeper and deeper through the wild  
Magnificence of trees. Each bird

Had newly seen him, and just heard  
Some rare harmonious speech that died  
Into its liquid song ; each place  
Was awed yet, having felt him glide  
Loftily through it, leaving trace  
Of luminous majesty and grace  
And strange transfiguration on all.  
O ! there was many a clear footfall  
Approaching grandly, shaking long  
The attentive solitudes with strong  
Rythmical thunder,—O the leaves !  
The ponderous draperies of green  
The dragon-like liana weaves,  
Were ofttimes stirred, ay, parted c'en,  
As though a hand would have been laid  
That moment on her wondering head,  
And sudden revelations made  
Of all the mystery of her thought—  
And yet no miracle was wrought ;  
While only lasted there instead



The great appalling quiet noon,  
With yellow glints of sunlight shed  
Through long bright inlets ; or too soon  
The day in momentary glare  
Went down, and joyless, shook the air  
With the immense night-shudder.

Then

A weary melancholy ill  
Became her life to her, as when  
Some crushed palm-sapling fades or dies  
Whom its rich inward scents must kill,  
And the repression of flushed leaves  
That cannot rise to wave and thrill  
In azure heights of tropic skies :  
So seemed it with her, and she went  
To a lone forest lake that heaves  
With no fond swell of cadenced waves,  
But hollows out its liquid tomb,  
And deepens shadowy and content

In the green hollows of its gloom ;  
Above it monstrously the trees  
Have stridden, and their crossèd limbs are bent  
And locked in the contorted throes  
Of savage strife, while o'er them grows,  
Darkening with cumbersome increase,  
The dank black parasite. Alone  
She sat there drooping ; a disease  
Her melancholy thought was grown,  
Her love of a great thing unknown,  
Or known to all and hidden from her.  
She was estranged now from blithe day,  
And left the fair birds far away,  
Nor chose to hear the tanager,  
Whose black eye seemed to know so well  
All things she sought, and would not tell.

Greater it seemed her heart must grow  
Than bird or flower at all might know,

And very desolate was her walk  
Through the green lovely solitude;  
For no wild creature of the wood  
Was high enough to feel or talk  
Or commune with her. For her love  
Might be the God who reigned above,  
Unknown, tremendous in the blue ;  
But the slim palm-trees were so high,  
She might no way ascend thereto.  
Or perchance he was wandering through  
Some mightier forest all remote,  
Or dwelt in marvellous countries nigh  
The world's end, where the salt wave smote  
The shadowy blue Bahamas' shore,  
And she must dream on evermore.  
• And lo ! her dream's exalted joy,  
And endless wonder and vague sweet—  
The faith no long day might destroy,  
The vast hope making her heart beat  
Through silent hours of the sun's heat,

The vision that had filled the fiery west,  
And rose up making the huge night  
Speak and sing wondrously—were best  
Of all things to her life, and more,  
Yea, e'en than that strange country, bright  
With manifold shapes and hues, and more  
Than its red warrior-folk, whose town  
Boisterous along the river shore  
Held yet a home that seemed her own.  
And to the lover who now bore  
Such hopeless passionate looks, that wooed  
With their dumb desolation, nought  
She yielded, save some pitying thought  
And strange word he scarce understood—  
How a surpassing god, unsought,  
Unknown, was holding all her heart  
Close to his mysteries, and no part  
He or her brethren had therein,  
Unless some flower should quite begin  
To teach them out of its rare hues

Unheard of secrets, or with loose  
O'erflowing song, a forest bird  
Should tell such things, as when they heard  
They should be changed and live again.  
Could he who loved her say one word?  
The countless voices sang so plain,  
Passing her charmed ear, from height  
Or depth or far unfathomed green,  
Gave answer to her, making bright  
Some dim place in her heart; could e'en  
That love of his for summer have been  
To one of those unfading blooms  
Of speechless and transcendant thought  
That grew up, filling with perfumes  
And fervours all her being, fraught  
With unknown seed within? But well,  
Alas! she saw that bird and flower,  
And all the eloquent forest, turned  
Their dim side unto him, or fled,  
'Or shut their sweet mouths, or sang lower

Their song, or sang mere vain things, learned  
Of empty echoes and dull dread ;  
And even the tanager would glance  
Full of bright scorn amid his dance,  
Mocking him, out of arrow-reach  
On topmost bough. Full of dumb love,  
That youth would follow afar off,  
Daring no longer to beseech,  
Stricken through to his warrior's heart  
More keenly than his whistling dart  
Was wont to strike in war or chase,  
All silent and with scarce a stir,  
More than a gliding snake made,—her  
He followed, hearkening many a space  
In the side forest's hiding-place.

## CANTO THE SECOND.

I am that curst and hopeless one. My face  
Has caught the brown glow of these Southern  
seasons,  
And warm new virgin worlds have burnt the trace  
Of half a summer on me ; in its place  
Is none the less that memory of treasons  
And faithless faces, and that love, half hate,  
The rest despair and lust, that woe—that fate—  
That evil I perceive, not one man's doom,  
But a great death in a decorous tomb  
Called Europe.

Would the taintless sun could reach  
To burn away the dull dust at my heart,  
And quite transmute its yearnings, and then teach  
The ruined intuitions of pure feeling

One frank, warm love of this unsullied part  
Of lovely, passionate earth. I mock that thought !  
The old world's wound is past the new world's healing,  
And Europe holds the child that Europe taught.

The last days in a desolate-peopled city  
Were long with wretchedness. I felt the whole  
Dissembled pang that inwardly depraves  
The love alike of king and courtesan,  
And dries the very sources of soft pity,  
Hardening the farewell word the heart most craves  
'To leave behind. I understood each man  
In his consummate coldness, and the lying  
Of every woman's love and jewelled smile  
Was bare to me in secret. I saw dying  
In agonizing bonds, beneath the vile  
Enamelled falsehood of triumphant fashion,  
All lonely loveliness of truth and passion,  
Stung to a poisoned death by one small asp,  
The deathless fiend, Mistrust—from kiss to kiss,  
From heart to heart, crawling for aye unscen ;



Given in the ready hands, unheeding clasp,  
Lying in wait beneath each coming bliss,  
Spoiling the fair place where a true past hath been.

And so I did not curse her whom I curst  
In the appalling hour that taught me first  
To see her as she is ; to be alone  
For ever with the angel overthrown,  
The self she spoiled, and left me. No, the throne  
She has not moved from hath a chain as cruel  
As gold can be, drawn tight across the heart,  
Till the restraint hath cankered every part,  
And joyless is the splendour of each jewel,  
And pitiless the semblance of each joy  
Put on her daily. He who out of love  
Or hate should change or slay her, would destroy  
One long, keen punishment some Lord above  
Sees and remits not. For she may not fall,  
And she shall never dare to love at all.

Sitting at noontide in the gilded hall  
Of one of those vain-glorious palaces, ●  
Haunted ere night time by some shrieking host  
Of void, disconsolate souls, whose miseries  
Stalk tombless through the shifting centuries.  
'That shadowy horror that appalleth most,  
'The loneliness of kings, took hold on me.  
Surely it laid a cold hand on my heart,  
And with the cruel, supernatural speech  
Of one who knoweth all things, made me see  
And measure and consider, part by part,  
The soul of Cleopatra ; then of each  
Most exquisite and exorable queen,  
And still, in clear discourse, unshrinking, keen,  
Told me the truth concerning many a dame,  
Adored and of an all unspotted fame,  
Laid bare the shallow secret or the shame,  
And bade me then be wise with scarce a taunt.  
And many times, in the histories of doom  
Written of men and women, over whom

The graves are tearless, and the past makes vaunt  
Of hollow praise or passionless lament;  
I saw the face, I found the lineament  
In all respects of her I was content  
To bind myself the slave of : in my soul  
She was the prophecy of page on page,  
That named her with the name some former age  
Counted its curse, and left its aureole.

And then I scarcely know what fatal rage  
Urged me to seek such wisdom's sad extreme,  
To probe yet further, and to find the core  
Of all her life ; to overthrow each dream,  
To question, to examine, to explore,  
To rack each reticent nerve of memory,  
Piercing and ruining the lovely ore  
Of many a fond illusion, just to see  
How hollow the clear hollowness might be—  
In truth, to work out with a fearful might  
Myself mine own unmitigated hell ;

For, when I stood in the cold, cruel light,  
And knew the depths, and gazed up to the height  
Of that consummate knowledge, O ! I fell—  
Yea, weeping as the hopeless souls may weep,  
And for one little hope of her—to keep  
One undestroyed deception as before  
To love and live in,—would have knelt once more  
And served the blindest God that men adore.  
Alas ! if some world-conquering Emperor,  
Roaming among his ruins, with the sun  
For compeer, and the moon, that weeping nun,  
For pale, reproachful consort, should repent,  
Loathing the loneliness of empire won,  
And yearn to bring again the sweet content  
Of people there, and life, and grace, and sound,  
To fill once more each hollow tenement,  
And lift the fallen temples from the ground,  
Whom, yearning so, the sun's red taunt at noon  
Must answer, and the misery of the moon  
Mock him at night with silence ; then my own

Great hopelessness were a thing not unknown,  
Nor quite unparalleled, nor all alone.

I had long ceased from that consuming need,  
To seek her where she was, to have indeed  
The sight and presence of her ; now, alas !  
It mattered little how her days might pass,  
I knew and saw ; having so felt and seen,  
There could not be one thing that had not been ;  
And in some rugged and remotest cell—  
Rock-guarded, sea-environed solitude,  
Silenced and overawed by my great mood  
Of mightier desolation—I could tell  
Her deepest thought that hour, and see and dwell  
Most intimately with her in the home  
Of inward self-avowal. There with crowds  
In some cold glittering capital—at Rome,  
In languid ease ; at Venice, in disguise—  
I reached her through the glitter and the shrouds,

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I alone ; for my soul's enlightened eyes  
Had read her inward self, and did divine  
A soul dividing solitude with mine.

•

And once, beholding vain eternity,  
Made of irreparable life—aghast,  
With nearness of her face for destiny,  
And all the future plighted to the past,  
Seen like an arid country, red and vast,  
Scathed by one present memory—I besought  
Some death that were not momentary—aught,  
For blindness and oblivion and reprieve,  
A grief not all of mine to share and grieve,  
A labour to be lost upon, a wide  
Inhuman wilderness, wherein to hide—  
A darkness of a forest.

## ● CANTO THE THIRD.

Refulgent moment of supreme emotion,  
Sweetening the earth, swelling the lurid ocean,  
Making a flagrant painting of the sky,  
Burdening the soul of things with dumb devotion,  
Urging the heart of man to speak and die,  
Speaking then in a bird's despairing cry,  
Breaking then, agonizing, passing by !

So the tremendous evening fades, and night,  
Like a great noiseless eagle, at one flight  
Covers the glowing country of the light.

Hark how, a mile away, the wild Savannah  
Wakens and heaves and roars ! Inward this road,  
And then a rush through plantain and banana,  
And then the forest. Where the strange flower glowed,  
The giant yellow flower between the trees,  
The blossom of the dragon-like liana,

There she awaits me ; there her hands will seize  
And hold me to the fire of her heart, ●  
That wild Brazilian fire, whose diamond dart  
Makes the small bosom of the humming-bird  
A coruscation.

Who would speak a word  
Through such transcendant silence ? All was done.  
And once more in the day, beneath the sun,  
She and I journey, as though two were one.  
She and I, in a gliding boat of bark,  
Are going up the mighty Amazon ;  
On either side of us a forest dark  
With wonders that the light ne'er looked upon,  
Whence ever here and there some brilliant thing  
Issues enchanted. Sometimes great trees fling  
Their tortuous arms across, and endless trails  
And coils and thongs of leafage and of bloom  
Hang down and sweep the wave, and scarce leave  
room.



Or stretch their dense impenetrable veils  
All overhead. And now the waters dream  
And darken in the shadows where they keep  
Rich stains of leaf and flower buried deep,  
In pastures where the feeding fishes gleam,  
Spangled with suns and stars ; and now the stream,  
Bounding with glossy back beneath some cape,  
Goes onward like an oscillating snake,  
Until one midmost rock's unyielding shape  
Thwarts it, and lo ! whole seas of fury break  
From lashed sides, and the rock and river wage  
A roaring, endless strife ; but slim and swift  
As the Anhinga bird, we dart or drift,  
Or hurry through the eddies, and the rage  
Of the wave's desperate onset far behind  
Is lost among rich murmurs. Then the noon,  
In some delicious spot where slowly wind  
The weakened currents round soft oases,  
Linked by their joining flowers, allures us soon  
So overwhelmingly with perfumed breeze,

And purple glow and wonderful appeal  
Of supernatural colours that reveal  
Strange speechless yearnings of the heart, and steal  
Into its subtlest communings, that long  
We linger, feeling what the waters feel,  
And what the flowers are faint with, and a throng  
Of passionate thought goes mingling with the song  
Of low-voiced love-birds, till we join the dream  
Of all their emerald Eden. Nothing said  
Around, beneath, or answered overhead,  
Yet all one soul in one effusion seem  
The opulent odours, the transcendent gleam,  
The radiant heights of verdure—the cool gloom,  
The flowering orgies of unwonted bloom,  
The love, the thought—one soul, one dream, one  
doom !

Nursed in the noiseless water haunt where night  
And day are softened, and the liquid light  
And shallow fawning wastes for ever dwell  
In unison beneath an amber spell,

We watch some burnished miracle of green,  
Piercing the hollow shade with vivid sheen,  
The plume-tailed halcyon, with scintillant wing,  
Sudden and flashing, like a meteor stone ;  
Or gazing upwards, long enamouring  
Enthralling moments, all that world unknown,  
That labyrinth of leaves and blossoming,  
That waving ocean of sonorous day,  
Where the red palms expand in vast array,  
And the sun works his wonders, opens deep  
Surpassing vistas ; and enchantments keep,  
Or visions lure us thitherward in sleep.  
Unnumbered pass those redolent hours : a trance  
Of luminous magic lulls the whole expanse  
Of lovely wilderness. At length a call  
Comes from the waters ; then the clamorous din  
Of some amphibious host : then aimless fall  
The spent red arrows of the lurid light  
Among the tree stems, and a sun akin  
To flame leaves crimson on the palm-trees' height,  
And orange on the wave. Then sudden night.

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This Indian girl came softly to my side,  
In the resplendent border-land, one noon.  
I, lingering through the day's luxurious swoon,  
Communing with colossal sadness hewn  
In the red sunset, felt her long look steal  
Into my soul, as some dark glade may feel  
The sweet insinuation of the light ;  
And when I turned the momentary sight  
Of her unfading face touched me with yet  
One other thing my soul may not forget.  
Neither shall I forget a long rich hour,  
Eloquent between pausing sun and moon,  
The darkening forest and the closing flower  
Spoke in the silence with an unknown power.  
She stirred not at my side ; but let her cheek  
Fall in its soft effusion on my breast,  
The while her long, dark yearning gaze exprest  
Thoughts wonderful, and things she could not speak.

And looking on her face, I saw indeed  
How inwardly that hour her soul took heed  
Of love and far-off fate, and life and death,  
In some great height of sadness, passionate  
And pensive. And the woodlands' wavering breath  
Seemed tremulous, because it bore a freight  
Of unrequited tears. On either hand  
Brethren and sisters of her tribe did stand,  
Speechless and saddened ; then, a little while,  
Made farewells fading, and in shadowy file  
Passed onward through the shadowy forest land,  
Leaving her there and me ; and at her feet  
Her Indian lover, dying, making sweet  
His death with gazing on her.

Here is our oasis. Slow water-ways  
Murmur meandering through the golden maze :  
All the lulled river, like a winding snake,  
Fondles the flowerage of the bending shores,  
Glistens half hidden under blooming brake,

Or basks in glossy opening. Secret pores  
Enchant the air with an exhaling scent,  
And great corollas tossing redolent,  
Like high-swung censers, lavish a large gift  
Of magical strange fragrance ; while the palms,  
Rising exuberant, emulously lift  
Crowned heads surpassing to the exalted calms  
And luminous heats of high ethereal day.  
In such an Eden glorious creatures stay,  
Fearless of foe, and many a nest is made  
Safe in the blue recesses of the shade,  
By lazy golden fowl, whose feathers flame  
Most like the burning phœnix of old fame.

Here, when our gliding soft canoe was heard,  
Failed there a flower or ceased there any bird  
His lone ecstatic song? The red canes stirred  
Only with wonted music, shuddering sweet  
In long unanimous revelry : the wave  
Fawned on insatiably about their feet ;

The large leaves met behind us to repave  
The blossoming path for wading water-hen,  
And glossy green-billed trampler of the fen.  
And nothing broke the high beatitude,  
Harmonious through the one-voiced solitude,  
Where jubilant birds and scents of dreaming flowers,  
Poured out rich souls and blended them with ours.

And, truly, to be here in this our isle,  
In the red hour of the sun's last smile,  
Is fair and full of wonder ; for the banks  
Gleam with a moving splendour ; dazzling ranks  
Of lories, and the parrots manifold,  
In fluttering glory, crimson, green and gold,  
Flown banded from the forest hitherward,  
Dapple with shifting hues the bended sward  
Down to the wave ; or, lighting on some space  
Of rustling cane and undulating rush,  
Amaze the forests with their swaying grace,

---

And break the deepening blue with sudden gush  
And pageantry of colour.

Colibri !

Yea, let me live for ever here, and see  
Only the beauty of the place, and thee,  
Strangest and loveliest. 'There is some part  
Of the snake's fascinating soul in thee ;  
'Twas a surpassing flower that made thy heart  
Of passionate secrecy, of hues that start  
And rise and fill the soft depths in thy face,  
As unknown crimsons formed beneath the wave  
Expand and fade ; and all thy wild swift grace  
Belongeth to the bird that dims the eye  
With sunny lightning : whence one name they gave  
To thee and to the bird.

And by-and-by .

I shall know better all thy mystery.  
Here thou shalt bind me, and the flowers maybe  
Shall also bind me for thee day by day,



Adding inscrutably some lasting link  
Of fragrance round my heart ; here thou and they,  
Joining soft league against me, lull away  
My life to dream a life again, or think  
In lofty-cadenced rhapsodies that hold  
The long sonorous winds in worlds of gold,  
Singing transcendently above the palms.

Already I have felt the inward balms,  
Rich stealing emanations from the deep  
Unfathomable forest, healing me,  
O'erwhelming me in an enchanted sleep  
Of unremembering, buoyant luxury,  
Whence colour, perfume, sound, on painless wings,  
Issue immortal in wide liquid thrill  
Of softest dissolution. Unknown things,  
Reaching the secret of my kindred sense,  
Lure me, moreover ; so that I fulfil  
A daily-growing bond with the immense

Exuberant solitude ; while now the will  
Of some long-stifled ancient being intense  
Wakes me to soar forth boundless.

Oh, last night,

The great voice of the universal soul  
Seemed to be speaking to me from the height  
And from the depth, bidding me rise up whole,  
Blasting my weakness in the scornful roll  
Of thousand-throated thunder, Every tongue  
Of fair infuriate creature, gracious, strong,  
Uttered or roared or sang the frenzied song  
Of its appalling self, that once more flung  
A loud defiance through the fearless night,  
Great and without a grief. And I, like one  
Roused by some vast resuscitating voice  
From death's drugged lethargy, watched with delight,  
Against the jagged blue, the faultless poise  
And sheer intrepid leap or violent run  
Of ounce or jaguar—hearkening while the noise

Of all that hurricane of life and strife  
Roared and rolled on terrific through the leagues  
Of shaken woodland, till a loftier life  
Of great primeval passions and fatigues  
Rose and grew mine—a long exuberant breath  
Of pauseless life to end in dreamless death.

TRANSLATIONS.



*TRANSLATIONS FROM CONTEMPORARY  
FRENCH POETS.*

LÉON DIERX.

LAZARUS.

**A**T Jesus' voice dead Lazarus awoke ;  
Livid he stood a moment in the gloom ;  
Then, with the grave-clothes on him as a cloak,  
He staggered forward from the open tomb.

Silent, alone, he walked into the town,  
Crossing the common folk and common things,  
In quest, it seemed, of some one he had known,  
Silent, alone, in ceaseless wanderings.

Beneath the deadened pallor of his brow,

His eyes no lightnings gave ; nor, with a glance—

As though Eternity that held him now

Drew the look inward, changed his countenance.

Sombre as madness, with uncertain feet

As a weak child's, he went, or like one dazed

In an unnatural air. Along the street

Folk parted as he came, and stood amazed.

For knowing nothing of the common hum

Of earthly tones whose sense could no more reach

His rapt awe-stricken soul, he passed them dumb,

With fearful things to tell that found no speech.

Sometimes he shook with fever, stretched and stirred

An eager hand as to address that throng ;

But unseen fingers stayed the mystic word

Of some remote to-morrow on his tongue.

Then a great terror came on young and old

In Bethany ; the horror of the eyes

---

Of him who wandered through their midst made cold  
And stilled the stoutest hearts in drear surmise.

●  
Ah, who shall tell thine infinite unknown pain,  
Rejected of the grave that keeps its dead,  
Clad for the grave, sent living back again  
To re-live life and thine own steps retread !

O bearer with sealed lips of all the lore  
Man yearns to know, but shrinks from overawed,  
Couldst thou be human—feel the care once more  
Fret in the heart where late the death-worm gnawed ?

Scarce had death's darkness given thee back to day,  
Than, passing spectral through the infuriate crowds,  
Caught by no griefs or joys along the way,  
Thy life in some new gloom itself enshrouds.

Thy second life leaves nothing but the track  
Of those returning footsteps, and a tale  
Appalling on men's lips. Did Death reach back  
With stronger grip a second time, or fail ?

●



How often, when the shadows lengthening grow,  
A vast Form in the distance, wert thou seen,  
With lifted arms against the day's dying glow,  
Calling some slow death-angel?—or between

The grass-grown hillocks of the burial-ground,  
Threading thy way, heavy with speechless pain,  
And envy of the dead, who, dying, found  
Peace in their graves and came not forth again !

*FRANÇOIS COPPÉE.*

I.

THE GRANDAMS.

**E**MPTY the village is in late July,  
For livid clouds already some time since  
Brought threat of storms upbreuing in the west  
And fears for harvest to the husbandman.  
So now 'tis harvest-time, and vintage soon,  
The scythes are sharpened and the barns clean swept  
And reapers meeting joyously at dawn  
Go forth to gala days amongst the grain.

Now all this while the grandams left behind  
Sit in the sunshine at the village doors,  
A staff supporting hands and quivering chin,

For labour crippled them long years ago.  
In homely skirt of fustian, with large white  
Sun-bonnet, and a kerchief gaudy yet  
With some old battle scene, they sit all day  
Upon a bench, content with ne'er a word  
Or thought, perhaps, unless the quiet smile  
Conveys mute benediction to the sun  
That gilds the old church-tower, and makes so ripe  
The ears of corn their sons have gone to reap.

Ah, 'tis the best-loved time with these old dames !  
The fireside stories of long winter eves  
Scarce suit them now. The grandsire, their good  
man,  
Is dead, and one gets lonely being old.  
The daughter cannot leave her washing-tub,  
The son-in-law is busy at the vine.  
'Tis lonesome, true ; and yet not all so bad  
In summer when the bright sun warms you well.

---

Not long ago they had the child to rock,  
And the old hearts of country-folk beat slow  
And timed them with the cradle's easy pace.  
But now the babes are grown ; the youngest birds  
Have tried their wings, and want such cares no more.  
So the old dames, children again themselves,  
Have lost their second childhood's pastime now.

They might have turned the spinning-wheel, but Time  
Over their faded eyes has drawn a veil,  
And their thin fingers weary of the thread ;  
For those same hands of theirs, now blanced with  
    age,  
Have all too often urged the distaff on,  
Making the last sad garment, fair and white,  
For loved ones whom they buried long ago.

Yet not long poverty, the death of flocks,  
The eldest son made conscript ; not the year

---

Of dreadful famine following scanty crops,  
Nor thankless tasks unmurmuringly done ;  
Not even the fretting when the eldest girl  
In service far away forgot to write,  
With thousand woes that make poor mothers weep  
Silently in the night ; not even the sign  
From heaven when God's own lightning struck the  
mills ;  
Nor now that voice that speaks from all the past  
In yonder quiet ground against the church,  
Where between schools the children play with flowers  
Twined around many a well-known cross of wood—  
Not one nor all of these e'er shook their faith,  
Nor turned their Christian and heroic hearts.

And now their hearts' own time is come for rest ;  
And nothing seems more pleasant than to sit  
In summer on a stone bench in the sun,  
Watching with quiet joy the waterfowl,

Blue heads and green heads, splashing about the silt,  
Catching a snatch of singing now and then  
From busy scenes around the washing-tubs,  
Counting the waggon-horses come to drink.  
Their childlike smile and tremulous white brows  
Speak candour and content, as though past griefs  
Vex them no more, and they have pardoned all,  
And find that 'tis enough to have at length,  
After all else for ever put away,  
For only solace of their fourscore years,  
The kindly sun, ever the peasant's friend.

## II.

## FIRESIDE MUSINGS.

SOMETIMES beside my fire I sit and brood  
On a bird dying somewhere in the wood.  
The long sad days of dismal winter through  
The nests hang empty, desolate nests whence flew  
The birds last year : winds rock them to and fro.  
Ah, how the birds must die in the winter snow

And yet, when time of violets comes round,  
Their delicate corpses will not strew the ground  
Where we may run beneath the April sky.  
Say, do the birds, then, hide themselves to die ?

## III.

## THE THREE BIRDS.

I SAID to the dove, Thou canst fly above me,  
Go where the corn-fields are,  
And find me the flower that will make her love me :  
The dove said—'Tis too far.

I said to the eagle, Heaven is before thee,  
Help me to win her and die ;  
Go fetch me the fire of Jove, I implore thee :  
The eagle said—'Tis too high.

I said to the vulture, Tear out and devour  
Her love in my heart ; to lone fate  
Leave only what has escaped her power :  
The vulture said—'Tis too late.

## IV.

## THE THREE WISHES.

BLUSHING, I see her linger,  
I see her smile as of old ;  
Make for the loved one's finger  
A beautiful ring of gold !

All's over. Still I shall find her  
I wait and scarce repine ;  
For all that she left behind her  
Make me a silver shine !

Nay, but life grows too dreary,  
Heavy the heart and head ;  
O exile ! I am awearry :  
Make me a coffin of lead !



## V.

## THE JUDGMENT OF THE SWORD.

WHEN iron-browed Guntz returned from Palestine,  
Lying one night awake beside his wife  
Hilda, Sueno's daughter, in her dream  
Low muttering, he heard her speak a name,  
A man's name, his whose lands adjoined his own.  
Jealousy seized him ; he believed her false,  
And, taking down his sword, half drew the blade.  
But lo ! the candour of that sleeping face,  
Half-hid in wealth of chestnut hair, and lit  
By lingering fond looks of the moon, arrests  
His hand ; he hesitates, and now, rough lord  
Though he is, feels love a moment more than honour.  
Yet sure was Guntz his ear had heard aright.  
Then Guntz took counsel of his sword—that sword  
His fathers handed down invincible.

He set it up, half-naked as it was,  
Before the crucifix, and thus he spake :  
‘ O sword, my sword, O trusty African,  
Rebaptised in the blood of Saracens,  
So lately, speak ! resolve me now ! My wife  
Low muttering in her dream pronounced a name,  
His name whose lands are joined unto my own :  
I fear her false, but yet I am not sure.  
Resolve me now ; I know that treachery  
Aye found thee fatal, and my line’s fair fame  
I trust in thee, since thou hast kept it fair.  
Judge now my wife ! thy clear keen look of steel  
Alone shall read her innocent or false ;  
I know thou wouldst not have me lie beside  
One among womankind less true than thou ;  
Whether I strike her now, or strike her not,  
Judge therefore thou !’

Then, true and sure, the sword,  
Knowing that, though her heart had suffered taint,

Hilda had never sinned the dreamed-of sin  
With him whose name she muttered in her dream,—  
Then generous, yea, and yet as ever true,  
Not willing that the warrior should smite  
Like an assassin, sharply, of itself  
The sword of Guntz slid back into the sheath.

*ANDRÉ LEMOYNE.*

MARGUÉRITE : AN IDYL.

THE RIVER.

**W**HAT dream you, little *lavandière*,  
Without being hardy may I guess ?

You cease the song I love to hear  
And fold your hands in idleness.

MARGUÉRITE.

My dream is of a land you know.

THE RIVER.

The land up-stream where willows bend  
And gaze into my depths below,  
Letting their long pale hair descend  
And trail along the wave ?

MARGUÉRITE.

Not so ;

My dream went scarce as far:

THE RIVER.

Ah, then,

The pond, maybe, where rush and reed

Stand thickly crowded and impede

My stream's pure thread ?

MARGUÉRITE.

Not so, again.

The spot is just a league beyond

The field of roses,

THE RIVER.

Where I cause

The mill to turn ? A maiden blonde,

With eyes that mate the blue flax-flower,

Greets there each morn.

---

**MARGUÉRITE.**

Scarce there—yet pause ;  
For know'st thou not, a little lower,  
An island where with opening arms  
Thy stream embracing hugs the fields ?

**THE RIVER.**

Yea, for I love those quiet farms  
Where purple clover grows and yields  
Such fragrance all its wavy way.

**MARGUÉRITE.**

'Tis there.

**THE RIVER.**

I passed but yesterday,  
'Twas feast of Midsummer : the gay  
And happy girls were dressed in white  
Their silver-buckled shoes shone bright.  
Joining their hands in one great round,  
They danced about the flower-strewn ground,

And while they danced, young maids and men,  
The sight made old folk young again.

One only mid the comely boys  
Took not his part of all their joys,  
And, deaf to bagpipes and to song,  
Mused at a distance from the throng.

He was a tall dark mower, made brown  
By summer suns and winds ; a crown  
His bright hair seemed like any king's.  
Day fled with sunset's crimson wings :  
The girls passed on their homeward way ;  
He mused : one had not come that day.

MARGUÉRITE.

Is she he thought of dark or fair ?

THE RIVER.

Look in my stream and see her there.

*PAUL VERLAINE.*

A PASTEL.

**Y**OUR soul is like a landscape choice and fair,  
Joyous with dancing, lutes, and masquerade,  
Wherein the folk, though gay the garb they wear,  
Look almost sad throughout the long parade.

All singing in the minor of love's kisses,  
And life the willing slave of love the strong,  
They seem as though they doubted of their blisses,  
And dreamy moonlight mingles with their song :

The dreamy moonlight of a Watteau painting,  
That silences the birds, and where one sees  
The sobbing fountains all like figures fainting,  
Tall, slim, amid the statues and the trees.



*ERNEST D'HERVILLY.*

I.

KEETJEN.

**T**HE frieze cloth of her bodice white  
Stirs as her heart's pulse comes and goes ;  
On windy morns you catch a sight  
Of stockings green and little shoes.

Dark days in winter early and late  
She skims across the frozen creek,  
Basket on arm ; her tiny skate  
Cutting the ice, leaves scarce a streak.

All Saturday she takes to rub  
Copper and stove ; then, ere to bed,  
Each kitchen tile she'll scour and scrub  
Till raw beefsteaks are not so red.

## II.

## ON THE BANKS OF THE TAUBERT.

My mistress is fair and cost a great deal !

Real rings of iron drag down her ears,

Her teeth are fine yellow, her lips like the peel

Of the luscious fruit the jujube bears ;

Her breasts, black and shining, are like the two parts

Of a big bright bullet riven in twain ;

From both sides of her nose—and this is what starts

My fancy—hang severed links of a chain ;

Her hair, short and crisp, is like a black wool,

Her eyes' jet centres are set in white

That gleams lustrous, translucent as china, and cool

And placid their look is by day and by night.

Bracelets of berries adorn each limb ;

What queen in gaudier dress appears ?

I slew many hundreds of parrots to trim

The robe such a royal way she wears.

'Twas I that tattooed her. I, the grave chief,  
 Did paint red birds in her cheeks' red flush,  
 And made her a parasol with the leaf  
 Of spreading palm and river rush.

## III.

## LA GROENLANDAÏSE.

LIKE oil of lamps, her skin is amber-hued ;  
 Her thick lips like two half-red cherries glow ;  
 A skilful *Onghekok* the brows tattooed  
 Of my sweet Eskimau.

From underneath those wide brows gleam a pair  
 Of softly slanting eyes ; her form is slight ;  
 A reindeer tendon binds her well-greased hair  
 All in one chignon bright.

## IV.

## IN LOUISIANA.

MISS TILDA JEFFERSON, indolent as fair—  
 Creoles are ever so—  
 Gives herself wholly to her rocking-chair,  
 To sway her to and fro.

Look at her in her muslin morning-gown :

Her blood is pure and pale ;

How fair her skin against her locks of brown !

How white her finger-nail !

Miss Tilda muses as the cane chair rocks.

Sweet one with foreign name,

What do you dream of, settling in those locks

That rose ? Of whence it came ?

Euphrasie, in striped kerchief, yellow and blue,

Looks at her pretty pet

And grins red-mouthed, as half caste nurses do,

Smoking her cigarette.

V.

LA CHINOISE.

SHE dwells in Peking, vast Peking :

The yellow-buttoned mandarin

Her father knows full many a word

Our learned Littré never heard.

She has a face like jonquil pale,  
 Sweet sidelong looks ; each tapering nail<sup>9</sup>  
 Is pink and pretty as a shell,  
 Save where she paints it brown as well

## VI.

## LA PARISIENNE.

THOU art the queen, Parisienne. In thee lies  
 The world's unquestioned oracle of dress ;  
 Speak, and from pole to pole, a phoenix, flies  
 Thy taste, fair Pythoness !

Mere costly bibelot for an étagère ;  
 Strass valueless but as a diamond set ;  
 A costume's ravishing falsehood makes thee fair :  
 Queen doll, thou rul'st us yet.

\* \* \* \* \*

Unmoved, triumphant, with a lurking smile  
 Of sense occult and most mysterious,  
 Thou passest by, setting on fire the while  
 People most serious.

---

Perfume, the bird, Youth, Spring, sweet melodies,  
The sap, the sunshine, love—disguised each wears  
Thy womanhood ; these are thy mysteries.  
And these thy twenty years.

# *SULLY PRUDHOMME.*

## I.

### FETTERS.

**I**N too much seeking love I found but grief ;  
I have but multiplied the means of pain ;

A thousand ties too poignant or too brief

Bind me to things that love not back again.

All things with equal power my heart have won—

Truth by its light, the Unknown by its veil—

A tenuous gold thread binds me to the sun,

And to each star a silken thread more frail.

The cadence chains me to the melody,

Its velvet softness to the rose I touch ;

One smile soon robbed my eye of liberty,

And for my mouth the first kiss did as much.

My life now hangs upon these fragile threads,  
Captive of all fair things I feel or see ;  
Each breath that change or trouble o'er them sheds  
Rends from my heart itself a part of me.

## II.

## THE EYES.

Innumerable eyes, beloved and fair,  
Some black, some blue, were wont to welcome day :  
Closed now, they slumber in the graves down there,  
And the sun rises as it did alway.  
Night lovelier than day filled with delight  
Blue eyes and black innumerable of yore ;  
Now the same stars look out from the same night,  
But darkness fills those eyes for evermore.  
Then, have they lost their look, their seging ? Nay,  
I will not think it ever thus could be :  
Those eyes are only turned another way,  
And now they look on things we may not see.



For as it is with stars when day grows new—

They wane away from us, but keep the skies—

So with the eye : it has its waning too ;

It sets, but I will never think it dies.

Innumerable and fair, and loved always,

The black, the blue : you closed them into gloom ;

But now those eyes are open, and they gaze

On the great dawn the other side the tomb.

### III.

#### THE SHADOW.

We walk : our shadow follows in the rear,

Mimics our motions, treads where'er we tread,

Looks without seeing, listens without an ear,

Crawls while we walk with proud uplifted head.

Like to his shadow, man himself down here,

A little living darkness, a frail shred

Of form, sees, speaks, but, with no knowledge clear,

Saying to Fate, ' By thee my feet are led.'

Man shadows but a lower angel who,

---

Fallen from high, is but a shadow too ;  
So man himself an image is of God  
And, maybe, in some place by us untrod,  
Near deepest depths of nothingness or ill,  
Some wraith of human wraiths grows darker still.

## IV.

## PROFANATION.

Beauty, that mak'st the body like a fane,  
What gods have spurned thee, since thou fall'st thus  
low,  
Lending thyself to harlots and thy glow  
To deck dead hearts that cannot live again ?  
Made for the chaste and strong, didst thou in vain  
Seek strength and purity, round such to throw  
Thy glorious garb aright ? and is it so  
Thou robest sin and hidest falsehood's stain ?  
Fly back to heaven ; profane no more thy worth,  
Nor drag down love and genius to base kneeling  
At feet of courtezans when thee they seek.  
Quit the white flock of women ; and henceforth

Form shall be moulded upon truth, revealing  
The soul, and truth upon the brow shall speak.

## V.

## THE STRUGGLE.

Nightly tormented by returning doubt,  
I dare the Sphinx with faith and unbelief;  
And through lone hours when no sleep brings relief  
The monster rises all my hopes to flout.  
In a still agony, the light blown out,  
I wrestle with the Unknown : nor long nor brief  
The night appears, my narrow couch of grief  
Grown like the grave with Death walled round about.  
Sometimes my mother, coming with her lamp,  
Seeing my brow as with a death-sweat damp,  
Asks, 'Ah, what ails thee, child? hast thou no  
rest ?'  
And then I answer, touched by her look of yearning,  
Holding my beating heart and forehead burning,  
Mother, I strove with God, and was hard prest.'

## VI.

## THE APPOINTMENT.

'Tis late ; the astronomer in his lonely height,  
Exploring all the dark, descries afar  
Orbs that like distant isles of splendour are,  
And mornings whitening in the infinite.  
Like winnowed grain the worlds go by in flight,  
Or swarm in glistening spaces nebular ;  
He summons one dishevelled wandering star ;  
' Return ten centuries hence on such a night.'  
The star will come. It dare not by one hour  
Cheat Science or falsify her calculation ;  
Men will have passed, but watchful in the tower  
Man shall remain in sleepless contemplation.  
And should all men have perished there in turn,  
Truth in their place would watch that star's return.

*HENRI CAZALIS.*

I.

IN PASSING THROUGH A FAIR.

I SAW an eagle with closed eyes,  
A captive in his own dominions ;  
His high cage open to the skies,  
But with no room for play of pinions.

Beneath him two right happy doves  
Ceased not to murmur, bill and coo,  
And never wearied of the loves  
They knew so well, yet found so new.

The king-bird held his haughty air,  
But now and then just half relented

To look with pity on a pair

Whom such a trifle kept contented.●

## II.

### SADNESS OF THINGS.

The stone was sad for thinking of the oak,

That strong and free on a fair height was growing,  
And o'er the plain gazed proudly from the rock  
And smiled to feel the sun at midday glowing.

The oak was sad with thinking of the cattle

That grazed and wandered through the field at  
leisure,

The stags that clashed their antlers free in battle,

Or browsed at peace or bounded full of pleasure.

The brute was sad for thinking of the wings

To mount on high that to the bird were given,

And how the eagle sees most mighty things—

And man was sad, thinking of God in heaven.

# *CATULLE MENDÈS.*

## I.

### SWEETNESS OF THE PAST.

I AM like one upon the sea, who dreams while  
far away

That soon at home his thought will fly back, yearning  
To see the waste of azure waves, white birds and whiter  
spray.

When on my cheek I feel thy kisses burning,  
Some kiss thou gav'st me long ago grows sweeter far  
than they,

Sister, 'twere sweet, 'twere very sweet returning.  
Rememberest thou? Ah, keep the past, bid e'en its  
sorrows stay :

The griefs of old seem joys our hearts are learning ;  
How very fair has now become the very darkest day !

The present only has no crowns worth earning ;  
And if I hide my heart's contempt and take it as I  
may,  
'Tis that I know this gift my soul is spurning  
Will find the morrow joyless when I think 'twas  
yesterday.

## II.

## THE LAST SOUL.

No gods in heaven, earth's altars overthrown,  
No hope to crown short life, and no thanksgiving ;  
Man, fallen at last from all his dreams, was living  
With weariness and fear immortal grown.  
  
The jackal only knew the burial-places ;  
The prayer had crumbled from the marble hands  
Of sculptured ancestors, and through all lands  
Death raised no prayer, life left no hallowed traces.  
  
Did none remember, then, how once man's soul  
Said, ' I believe ' ? Were legends all forgotten ?



Where churches stood men counted gains ill gotten  
And many a cross was now a shamble-pole.

The sun grew sick of dawning and expanding

Men's aimless destinies with day on day :

When lo ! there came a man from far away,  
Who said to me, ' There is one temple standing.

In the most distant land from whence I came,

Relic all recordless, it falls but slowly ;

Ivied and moss-o'ergrown, it still keeps holy  
A memory of a god without a name.'

Then I forsook the towns that had no churches,

The hearts that knew no thrill of love or hope,

Where even Doubt was dead and ceased to grope,  
Since Truth had vainly crowned man's cold researches.

I journeyed thitherward. Days followed days.

I passed dead capitals on dried-up rivers ;

The wind in flitting through their portals shivers,  
And Solitude sits in their dismal ways.

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Youth gave me strength at first, and swift feet bore me ;  
But ere the way was finished youth had sped ;  
With faltering feet at length and aged head  
I came : the world's last temple stood before me.  
Fainting, but eager and all comfortèd,  
I touched the altar with a brow grown hoary :  
Then my expiring soul went up in glory,  
A tardy incense to a god long fled.

## III.

## PENTHESILEA.

The warrior-hearted queen leaves her cold skies  
Of Scythia.

With those other maids her sisters  
She gains the lowlands, where, in battle pitted,  
Hot-blooded braves slay panic-stricken foes.  
Let any other card fine wools at home,  
Not she ! Insatiate war-lust, on a sudden  
Gnaws her with hungry fang to overcome  
And add that strongest, fairest of the Hellenes,

Achilles, to her conquests. Fierce, loose-maned,  
Her horse bounds with mad onset ;  
Penthesilea's cry

Is added to the shock of arms and wheels.

Achilles ! O Achilles ! O Achilles !

This is thine hour ; thy blood a crimson stream  
Shall reach thy father's feet ; a gruesome dream  
Scares him already and makes him cry, " Achilles !"

'Thou art a lion slaying the flock at leisure,  
A raging wind no sapling tree withstands ;  
How many slaughtered kings in countless lands,  
Torn by the birds, fill now thy crimes' full measure !

'Like a young god how often hast thou revelled  
With sword-strokes echoing still ! Women, too,  
yielded,  
And on thy gory arms, that lately wielded  
The reeking blade, fair locks have fallen dishevelled.

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'But tremble thou in turn ! The world's redress  
Is come to-day : the sword is raised to strike thee,  
E'en hers who never felt for one man like thee  
Terror or tenderness.'

So on a path whence there was no returning  
The dauntless virgin madly rushed and cried,  
Not knowing that ere sunset, spurned, not spurning,  
'Twas she should kiss the warm dust crimsoned  
wide  
With her own blood, casting before she died  
On the young god, her slayer, fair-haired, strong-  
eyed,  
A look that seemed with love, not hatred, burning.

#### IV.

##### THE CONSENT.

Ahod was a wealthy herdsman of the plain.  
His wife one summer day set down her pitcher  
And lay and slept beneath a tree, in Bethel,  
And sleeping had a dream after this fashion—

At first it seemed she woke from such a dream,  
And Ahôd said thus: 'Wife, get thee up in haste.  
Last year I sold to merchants of Sagor  
A hundred sheep; they owe me still one-third.  
'Tis a long way and I but feeble now.  
Whom can I send to Sagor in my stead?  
Few are the faithful envoys one may trust.  
Go thou and claim those thirty silver shekels.'  
Then spake she not of terror, or the desert,  
Or thieves, but said, 'Dear lord, I am thy servant.'  
And when with his right hand he showed the way  
She wrapped her mantle round her and departed.  
The road was hard, and thick with pointed stones  
That cut her feet and made tears brim her eyelids;  
But, ceasing not, she journeyed all the day,  
Nor ceasing in the evening journeyed still,  
Taking no heed of sight or sound—when lo,  
Suddenly, with fierce cry, one leapt upon her,  
Held tight her mouth, and with the other hand

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Rent off her mantle ; then before he fled  
Stabbed her, leaving the dagger in her breast.

A sudden start of horror in her dream  
Woke her thereat.

Her husband stood before her.

‘To merchants of Sagor,’ said he, ‘I sold  
Last year one hundred sheep ; one-third is owing.  
The way is long ; I am but feeble now.  
Whom may I send to Sagor in my stead ?  
Since faithful messengers are few to find,  
Go thou and claim those thirty silver shekels.’  
Then the wife said : ‘Thou art my lord ; I go.’  
She called her children to her, laying her hand  
Upon the elder’s head, kissing the younger.

Then, wrapping on her mantle, she departed.

## V.

## PARVULUS.

The Lord was teaching folk by the sea shore ;  
His voice had quelled the storm, it raged no more ;  
His word was like a balm, and did impart  
Joy to the righteous, hope to the broken heart.  
'Whoso shall love me perfectly,' said He,  
'Shall look upon my Father and on Me.'  
And people listened humbly to His Word.

Now on the outer side of them that heard  
A certain woman, leading by the hand  
Her child, had halted, passing on that way,  
And hearkening for a while the twain did stand.  
She had grown old with gleaning, and that day  
The load she carried was of straw, not wheat,  
And all her mother's heart heaved full of sighs ;  
But lo, the boy was rosy-hued and sweet ;

A fair small child he was, with smiling eyes  
That shamed the miserable rags he wore.  
The child said, 'Mother, who speaks there on the  
shore?'

'Child, 'tis a prophet : holy laws they be  
He gives to men.'

'I wish that I could see  
The prophet, mother.' And the child strove hard,  
Stood on tiptoe, and pressed to find a breach  
In the thick crowd ; but many tall folk barred  
And hemmed him in, so that he could not reach  
To look upon the Master whose kind speech  
Wrought in his ear. Then, eager still, he cried,  
'I should behold him, mother dear, if thou  
Wouldst lift me in thine arms.'

But she replied,  
'Child, I am tired ; I cannot lift thee now.'



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Then a great sadness came upon the child

And tears stood in the eyes that lately smiled.

But Jesus, walking through the crowd, drew near  
E'en to the child and said, 'Lo,—I am here.'

THE END.



